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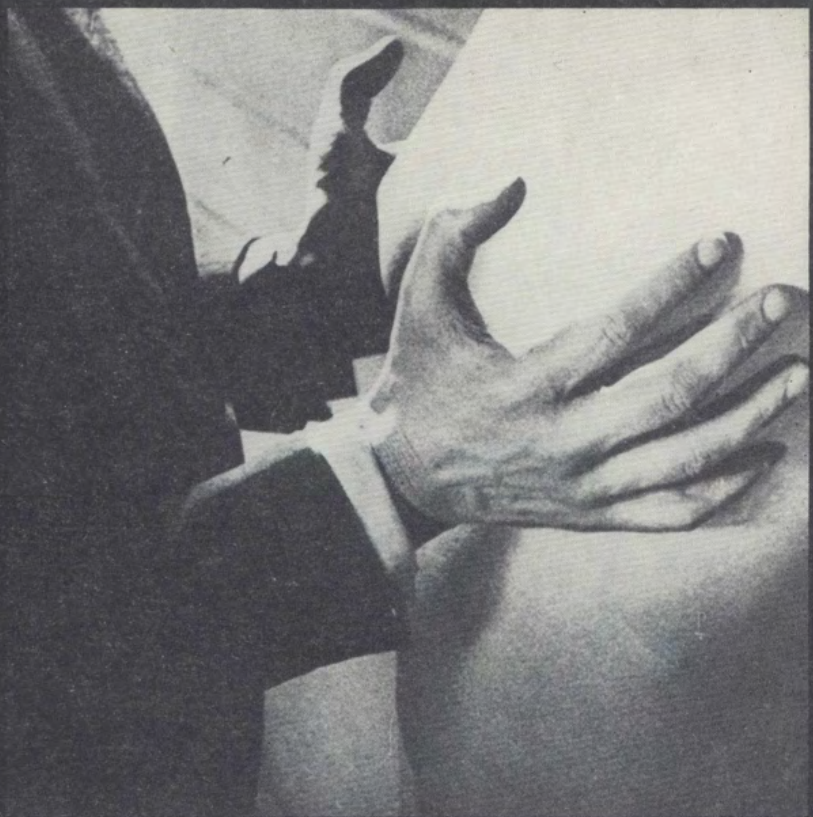
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SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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A 'French' Cinema?

IS IT JUST COINCIDENCE that the only thing five recent French films have in common is a Ford Mustang? (*La Curée, Un Homme et une Femme, Tendre Voyou, Monnaie de Singe, Le Gendarme de Saint Tropez*.) Is it just coincidence that the latest films by Malle, Truffaut, Chabrol, Clément, Verneuil, de Broca, etc., have all been backed by American capital? Is it just coincidence that at a time of stock market recession (last July the French share index touched its lowest point since 1959), Pathé-Cinema shares jumped in less than a month from 67 to 129 francs, on the strength of a rumour that a big American film company was trying to gain a controlling interest?

And this isn't the only example. For some months, Paramount has been involved in a cinema modernisation plan, acquiring a 50 per cent interest in the Siritsky Brothers' Athos Film Company, one of the main outlets in the Paris area. Meanwhile three big French distribution firms have gone out of action; and while the walls of Paris have been plastered

with posters announcing that 'The Russians Are Coming' it's the Americans who are really coming, as subsidiaries of the big U.S. firms calmly go on tightening their grip on a sizeable share of the French market. At the present rate, we shall quite soon be seeing 'French' films presented at festivals under the auspices of the Star Spangled Banner. Soon there may not be a French cinema at all; just an American annex, Hollywood sur Seine. The really serious thing would be for no one to notice what is happening.

* * *

It's a simple fact: there's a shortage of money at every stage of making and marketing pictures, and both the production and distribution ends of the industry are bleeding slowly to death. Despite the fact that 20 per cent of national production finance comes from a subsidy fund, losses for 1966 were in the region of 4,000,000,000 old francs. What industry could survive this kind of blood-letting? Too many companies are at present competing with each other for the existing funds. Might it be more efficient if their administration were taken over by the French Treasury? At least this might be a way of avoiding the kind of crises we've had in the past, which are liable to slow down the whole machinery and cause unfair checks to impetus. For the present system, in which subsidies

* *Viva Maria, Le Voleur, Fahrenheit 451, Le Scandale, Is Paris Burning? The 25th Hour, Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine.*



Hollywood sur Seine

Gilles
Jacob

are related to the box-office earnings of the company's last film, could theoretically create a situation in which film-makers are entitled to more money than there are funds. (For the record, there were 683 French production companies in existence in 1966, only 14 of which have since gone out of business.)

The symptoms of slow suffocation are all too clear: under-capitalisation; mounting production costs; difficulties in finding independent finance; difficulties in getting credit from the finance houses; unemployment and empty studios. The State, sure of its control over Television, France's largest cinema, merely evades the increasingly pressing demands for tax relief. And rather than step up the annual subsidy rate of 9.4 million francs (the equivalent of an advance on box-office takings of 300,000 francs to approximately thirty feature films), it seems prepared to let French companies try to solve some of their alarming financial problems by becoming dependent on U.S. investment. So the Americans, with a foot already well in the door, move further in. The Centre Nationale du Cinéma shows no more concern than the

general public about the question of a film's nationality as determined by its capital investment. In France's present economic state, the feeling seems to be that there simply aren't the resources to take on the American giant.

There *is* one selective aid programme, whose allocation of funds is determined by a committee of public officials, respectably-minded writers, and the like. (A committee about which one could say plenty.) But it does ensure the making of certain so-called 'quality' films which, without it, would never see the light of day. The Administration recognises its own limitations, but is up against the problems of trying to reform a profession dominated by rampant individualism and a mesmerising awareness of past splendours. What is needed is the surgeon's knife; and all one gets is a few aspirins.

* * *

Two years ago, in fact, the comprehensive Holleaux Plan was put forward to rationalise and consolidate the French industry. Its provisions included aid to exports, stricter investment control and, in particular, the tax relief which everyone has been asking for in order to improve a film's chances of showing a profit. At the same time, it proposed that the producer's own minimum share in a film's financing should go up from 15 per cent to 25 per cent. This, along with

LEFT: JANE FONDA, PETER McENERY AND FORD MUSTANG IN VADIM'S "THE GAME IS OVER". ABOVE: TRUFFAUT ON THE SET OF "THE BRIDE WORE BLACK".



"THE BRIDE WORE BLACK": JEANNE MOREAU, CHARLES DENNER.

the new statutory minimum on company capital, should have had the effect of substantially reducing the number of small companies in business. But it was an all-or-nothing plan. Without the backing of the Finance Ministry, M. Holleaux didn't want to see a situation in which only the negative proposals were passed, actually restricting the profession still further. So nothing happened; and his document has been gathering dust on top of a pile of previous projects.

As for U.S. investments, the Centre Nationale is showing itself a lot less intransigent than General de Gaulle in its attitude to American power. Capital must be found wherever it presents itself; and the French attitude is regarded as more realistic than, say, that of Italy. Indeed, France's only precautionary measure is to try to ensure that America's share does not become too large, for fear of what might happen in the event of a massive withdrawal. In the face of all this official calm, however, it really does seem that the French cinema is in process of losing its independence. Wall Street increasingly controls its fortunes; while helping to keep it on its feet.

Truffaut's Bride Wore Black

I WENT OFF TO talk to François Truffaut about all this. Every time I meet him, I'm struck afresh by his friendliness, his enthusiasm, the absolute good sense of what he has to say about movies. He's very quick, very clear, has a tremendous sense of the practical, is always worrying about whether everyone who sees his films is going fully to understand them. The man who made *Les quatre cents coups* hasn't changed.

According to Truffaut, if the Americans are increasingly taking over the European cinema, this is because they are disappointed with their own movies. Since it has become decentralised, American production has lost a lot of its international authority. Paramount, Universal and United Artists, he suggests, are particularly on edge, and are fighting each other for the good scripts. And at the moment when Para-

mount, for instance, might like to make 75 films a year instead of 25, they've realised that their most serious problem is not a shortage of money but a shortage of interesting ideas.

There are misconceptions everywhere: young film-makers, for instance, don't have the nerve to offer projects to established stars, who are consequently thrown back on taking parts in mediocre films. (Jeanne Moreau has only had two offers in the last couple of months, neither of them at all promising; Brigitte Bardot is in rather the same boat.) On the other hand, there's a genuine shortage of new talent. And the people who want to get on don't have enough ideas: they are either too abstract (the ones who started out in criticism) or too humble (the ones who started as assistants).

But Truffaut is optimistic, and feels that the situation is better than it used to be. It's largely, he thinks, a question of energy: if one has a film one really wants to make, one can usually do it. Isn't Eric Rohmer, he points out, going to make a film with Trintignant? Isn't Jacques Rivette now shooting his own *L'Amour Fou* on location in Paris? This in spite of both directors having encountered enough difficulties in the last few years to discourage anyone. At the same time, the real problem now is that there are too many films, in particular an enormous number of shorts (not that anyone's likely to see them). And as a result, films which might have created a big stir fifteen years ago can now pass almost unnoticed.

* * *

"Personally," says Truffaut, "I'm always scared of publicity, and I think there are a lot of films to which it has been positively harmful. A film is complete in itself. It has its own intrinsic mystery, which can hold out against the advance publicity of stills, but not against things like trailers and TV extracts. That way, the spectator's curiosity has been satisfied. He's seen how it's put together and got an idea of its style. So why should he bother to go out to see it? I've noticed that films like *Au Hasard*, *Balthazar* and *Mouchette*, which had a lot of extracts shown on television, weren't very successful. Even advertisements can sometimes spoil a film. I remember

with Orson Welles' *The Trial*, one kept waiting for the shot of the typewriters, or of Antony Perkins standing in front of the huge door, and was rather disappointed when it came.

"I think a film ought not to have too much of an existence before it has actually been screened. That's why when it came to my own *The Bride Wore Black*, from the William Irish novel, I gave the press what amounted to a bogus synopsis—deliberately a long way off the film, and actually sounding much more like an Antonioni subject. It's a revenge story. There's an accident, a misunderstanding, a gun that ought not to have been loaded; and a woman finds that she's a widow on her wedding day. One by one she visits the men who knew her husband: one woman (Jeanne Moreau) set off against a whole number of men (Claude Rich, Brialy, Michel Bouquet, Michel Lonsdale, Charles Denner and Daniel Boulanger). Because the film was to be in English, Jean-Louis Richard and I devised a non-speaking part for Boulanger. And we haven't changed it; he still doesn't speak a word.

"The film isn't in the least psychological: it's more like a sort of feminine version of *Tirez sur le Pianiste*. The link is that all these men illustrate different ways of reacting towards a very pure, absolutely chaste woman. And as you know, I've always enjoyed this experimental mix-up of American themes and French temperament.

"We were trying to find a new subject for Jeanne Moreau that would have nothing in common with *Jules et Jim*. No laughing or smiling; this time I asked her for an absolutely neutral face, that of a professional absorbed in her work. It was when I was talking to Jeanne at the time of *Mata-Hari* that I remembered the book, and three or four unforgettable scenes in it which I could still visualise very clearly. The rights had been acquired by Al Bartlett, the American who specialises in stock shots of aircraft carriers, but he couldn't set up the production. Not surprising, really, because the end of the book is impossible: we had to find our own surprise ending . . .

"William Irish is a pseudonym used by Cornell Woolrich, the writer they call 'the thriller king'. There have been at least 22 American films from his novels and short stories: Tourneur's *The Leopard Man* (from *Black Alibi*), Siodmak's *Phantom Lady*; Harold Clurman's *Deadline at Dawn* (Clifford Odets did the adaptation); Arthur Ripley's *The Chase*; Maxwell Shane's *Fear in the Night*, and so on. There's also *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* (Woolrich wrote this under the name of George Hopley, another of his pseudonyms); and, perhaps more successfully in cinema terms, Tetzlaff's *The Window*. And, of course, Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. And now, I hope, *The Bride Wore Black*. Camerawork by Raoul Coutard; classical progression (three short flashbacks and a nice twist in the plot); but by using locations that aren't readily identifiable I've tried to create the effect of an imaginary landscape, without specifically saying this was what I was doing. There are some country house scenes, and as the weather was fine we shot them outside, on the lawn, with the characters sitting around on white garden chairs. I must say it looks very English.

"In fact, I'll be interested to see if the critics say all the things again that they always say about my films, no doubt because I break dramatic conventions and so on. 'A film where nothing happens; a pallid film . . . etc.' It really startled me when they said it again about *Fahrenheit*, because that was full of incident.

* * *

"This film is absolutely not a portrait of a woman. Jeanne Moreau is the central character, but even at the end we still don't really know anything about her. In *Jules et Jim*, Jim was the character one knew least about; and both of them are vehicles for taking the audience from one character to another. Each of the men she meets gets only a quarter of an hour and confides his most intimate secrets to her. In three scenes, we're supposed to learn all about them—which of course is wildly improbable. I really love the whole atmosphere of this sort of hazy story, these grown-up fairytales where the characters aren't really crooks but just a little on the mad side.

"Basically, the challenge is the same as with *Fahrenheit*: to find just the right kind of tone and dialogue to make a very

far-fetched story seem true and plausible. But it's also a reaction against *Fahrenheit*, because it gave me a lot more personal freedom: there's no heroic element in this story—quite the contrary. Another compensation for me: in *Fahrenheit* I had altogether fifty minutes without dialogue; in *The Bride* I have a lot of talk. Even if Jeanne hardly opens her mouth, the others are all very free with their confidences; and, as in *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, I've lifted whole sentences out of the novel. *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* has the finest dialogue of any film I know. I can't resist it, and in all my films there are sentences from *Les Dames*—commonplace but stylised expressions, like 'Surtout ne me remerciez pas.'

"Organising a picture is rather like shuffling cards, preventing the spectator from sympathising with one character rather than another. The whole job of shooting is a matter of balance, weighing the scales so that no one's caught at a disadvantage. It's the exact opposite of the Audiard-Gabin style, where Gabin is always allowed the last word, the hero's gesture, even if he hasn't opened his mouth right through the scene. But whenever I feel the audience may be making up their minds about a character, I always try to switch their sympathies around . . .

"A lot of films are harmed by cutting. *La Peau Douce* would originally have run for 135 minutes, and 25 minutes cut from the original script did it no good. So I try not to shoot anything I'm not going to use, to keep a careful time check, and to pick up time somewhere else if it looks as though we are over-running on length.

"When I've just finished a script, I always feel that it's very accessible: clear, neat and well-scrubbed. If there's anything

ON LOCATION FOR "THE BRIDE WORE BLACK": CLAUDE RICH, JEANNE MOREAU, JEAN-CLAUDE BRIALY.



subversive it comes out only when you start shooting. Suddenly, I find that I no longer want to make something that people are going wholly to believe in. In forty films, after all, Renoir has never been able to bring himself to create a wholly odious character; even Dalban, in *Toni*, had charm. When you're shooting, you find yourself saying: 'I don't want to fool the public; I want them to understand that all I'm doing is shooting a film . . .'

"Godard is inimitable in this, as in everything else. His films are more and more like personal confidences. If his audience has dwindled a bit lately, it's because films live off a larger public than the one for which they are designed. And all that's happened with Godard is that now his films are finding their real audience: the people who go are the ones who enjoy what he's doing. He really is the first film-maker for addicts. He has found a way of conquering the two or three worst things I know about the audience: polite indifference, vague interest, amused condescension. He has pulverised the system, and turned the cinema upside down, just as Picasso did with painting; and like Picasso, he's made everything possible. Finally, he's got away from the mystique of scarcity value. Before Godard, directors who made a lot of films were commercial hacks. Since he took to making almost three pictures a year, a lot of other people have adjusted their ideas about speed. The number of important films is growing; there's no longer that lengthy pause while we wait for the big director to come up with another one."

* * *

Before leaving, I asked Truffaut what he thought about Claude Lelouch's rather grandiose projects, which have been made possible by the thousand million old francs earned by *Un Homme et une Femme*. He wants to establish a kind of film centre: you'll just have to walk across the hall from the production company to the distribution company; young film-makers will be given the chance to shoot test extracts from their scripts, with a committee judging the results with a view to arranging finance; films of established young directors like Bellocchio or Schloendorff, which have problems in finding an audience, will be linked in production with sure-fire attractions like Lelouch's latest, *Vivre pour Vivre*. The centre will also have non-stop projection facilities, the most modern sound studios in Europe, a club for French cinéastes and foreign visitors, seminars . . . There's no doubt that Lelouch is a mine of ideas.

"I'm against it," Truffaut admits. "All he's going to create on the Avenue Hoche is an annex of the Centre du Cinéma. For every young director he helps, there will be nine left to fend for themselves who'll be frantically angry and disappointed. It just doesn't ring true. It will feel too much like popping in for a drink at Lelouch's. And it will inevitably lead to deals—old chums doing one another a good turn. Besides, it's crazy to go into distribution just now. UFA is closing; so is Cinédis; Cocinor is losing money. The distributor who tries to get bookings for intelligent films simply goes bankrupt. It's the same old story: on the surface the cinema may have changed, but basically it hasn't. The provincial exhibitor still calls the shots: *Sissi* and *La Grande Vadrouille* win all the marbles. In Paris there is still a range of distributors, and new films have a chance of being shown along with reissues, but less so in the provinces. One man controls the South of France. In Bordeaux, which is the worst place, three of Godard's films have never been shown. And in a few years, in any case, I suppose most films will be made by and for television.

"If I were invited to join Lelouch's selection committee I would refuse, just as after Cannes I would now turn down an invitation to join another festival jury. In the last analysis, I don't want to go on giving opinions that no one takes any notice of; we're just not talking about the same things; we haven't even seen the same film. It hurts one's pride too much.

"That's also why I have repeatedly turned down Agnès Varda's offers to take part in the film about Vietnam. First because either it's preaching to the converted, or else I can't

see who it is being aimed at. I can't see that it serves a useful purpose, and it upsets me to think you have to make a film like this before public opinion decides that it's wrong to behave the way the Americans are doing there. If films had any influence, *J'Accuse* would have stopped wars once and for all. But life is much stronger than films, and I don't like people trying to prove the opposite."

Far from Vietnam

I UNDERSTAND THE WAY Truffaut feels, but all the same I wanted to know something about *Loin du Vietnam*, and how such a film had ever managed to get started. I asked Alain Resnais.

"*Loin du Vietnam* is not a film about Vietnam, even though it's hard not to get obsessed with that war. But its aim is to get people thinking; and not just the people who see it, but the people who are making it as well. It's not a matter of pre-conceived ideas, or of trying to tell audiences how to think: that isn't the sort of conviction we want to produce. But of course the makers don't deny that they have political opinions. The totally objective film is an impossibility; it would take about a month to record a day in the life of the world, and it would be completely meaningless."

What happened is that a group of film-makers (Marker, Resnais, Agnès Varda, Jacques Demy, William Klein) got together, talked the idea over, and decided to go ahead with it. "Every week for more than two months we had a meeting; and these conversations, bringing together everyone currently in Paris who was interested in the project, sometimes involved as many as thirty people. Ruy Guerra, Claude Lelouch, André Delvaux, Joris Ivens, Godard, joined in. There is an unusual collective spirit about the whole enterprise."

The film is going to cost somewhere between three and four hundred thousand francs, with each of the film-makers putting up money for his own contribution. They hope audiences won't identify them with the separate sections (Chris Marker is editing them together), which all underline the horror and absurdity of any armed conflict; but that their collective film will bring home to us more precisely our vague general sense of collective responsibility. As to its form, the film mixes newsreel and fiction, 35mm. and 16mm. footage, sequences shot in both North and South Vietnam (Lelouch has done a kind of *ballet mécanique* of movement aboard an American aircraft carrier), and in the U.S. and in Cuba.

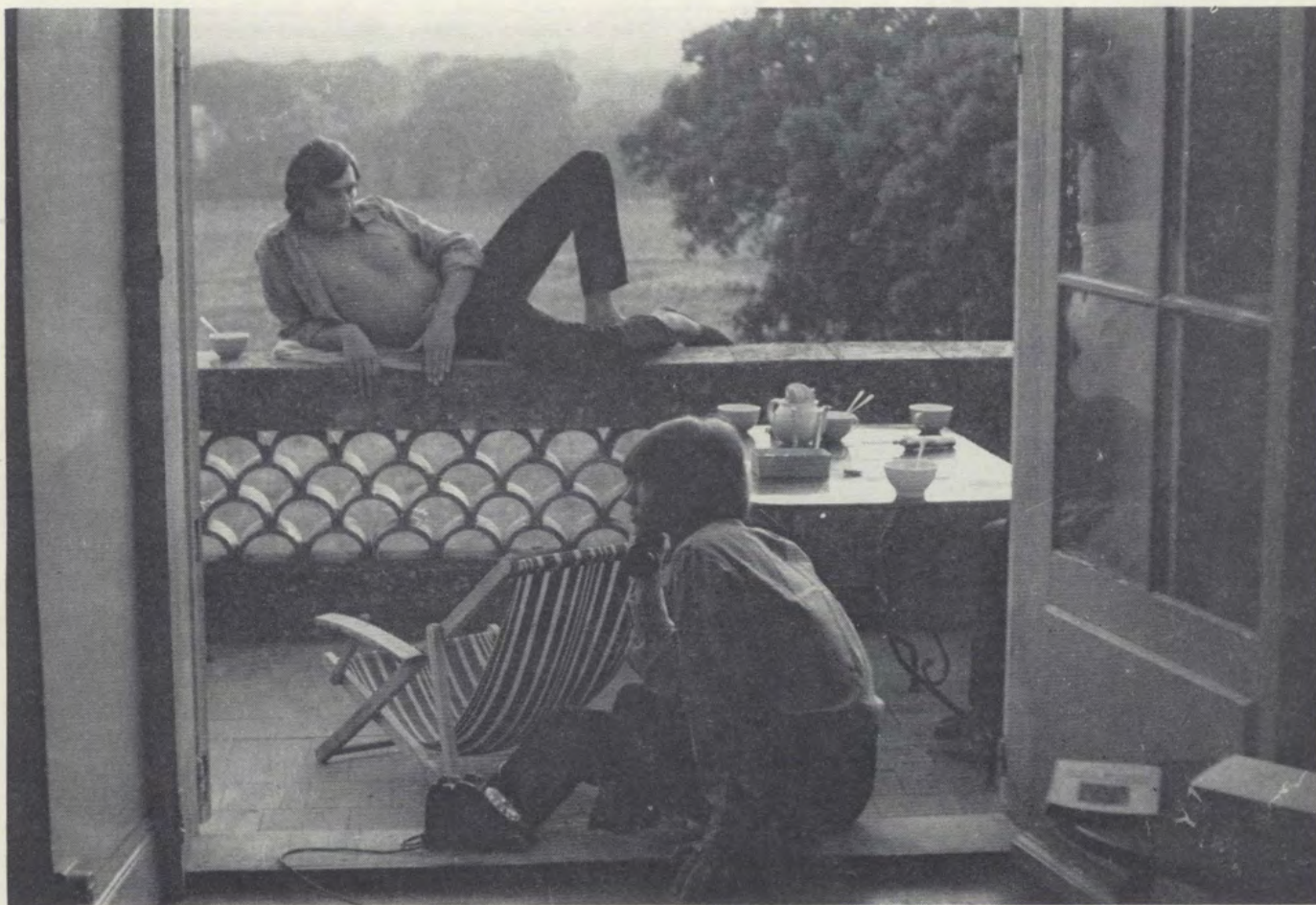
Actually, in the violence of some of its sentiments, the film could well be Cuban. "The Americans are today's Nazis . . . only guerrilla warfare will stop the imperialists!" The moderate element will be supplied by Resnais' sketch, about the state of mind of a left-wing journalist struggling with problems of commitment. At the last moment, the team decided—with her full agreement—to withdraw Agnès Varda's episode, re-edit it, and present it as a self-contained short. The film was already running at 125 minutes; and if Resnais' piece can get away with being something of a star performance, Varda's seemed to belong to a different film. Her name will none the less appear on the credits, along with an impressive list of cameramen (from Reichenbach to Coutard).

Is the spectator going to identify the authors of the different sections, even if he hasn't been tipped off in advance? One sequence, at any rate, won't be hard to spot: the one in which Godard faces the camera, to confide his own feelings in a kind of personal monologue and in the voice with which we're all familiar. This autumn the film will abandon the semi-secrecy that has presided over its making, and come out into the open on ordinary circuit release. Before that, *Loin du Vietnam* will have been seen at the Montreal and New York festivals.

Whether America's great film-makers are inspiring our own (Hitchcock-Truffaut); whether we are denouncing her policies, or she is colonising us, America is inescapable. Nearly five hundred years after Columbus, isn't it about time she discovered us?

FESTIVALS 67

BERLIN MOSCOW VENICE



"LA COLLECTIONNEUSE": PATRICK BAUCHAU, HAYDEE POLITOFF.

BERLIN

ON THE KURFÜRSTENDAMM the posters announced *Fantômas Conquers the World*, while in the multi-storied Europa Centre polyglot waiters shuffled between the restaurants in the House of Nations. Berlin still regards itself as the centre of the universe, and everyone still talks about the Wall. The festival reflects the paradox. 'Die Russen kommen, die Russen kommen nicht,' was the headline in the first issue of the festival daily. But the Russians weren't coming, and we settled down to a not quite international selection of Bubi Kino.

And young cinema it was, with a vengeance. So many first or second features, in fact, that after a week of it one began to feel the need of an Old Master or two. As it was, two veterans carried off the acting prizes: Michel Simon for Claude Berri's unashamedly sentimental *Le Vieil Homme et l'Enfant*, and Edith Evans for her remarkable performance in Bryan

Forbes' *The Whisperers*. The Golden Bear went, as everyone knew it would, to Jerzy Skolimowski's fourth feature *Le Départ*, which Richard Roud has already discussed from Cannes. I will only add here that, unlike him, I find it less memorable than *Barrier*—visually inventive, certainly, and more finished than the Polish film, but somehow less interesting. It was, though, streets ahead of almost everything else on view, and only Eric Rohmer's *La Collectionneuse* came anywhere near it.

Rohmer's film, one of six 'contes moraux', is a bitter-sweet comedy of manners, beautifully modulated and so unstressed that one has the feeling of eavesdropping on something as it happens. The story, such as it is, tells of two bohemians who take a villa in the hills behind Saint Tropez where they plan to idle away the summer days. One of them, Adrien, meets a girl, Haydée, congratulates himself on his wisdom in refusing to become part of her 'collection', and

passes her on to his friend Daniel. On the soundtrack we hear Adrien's comments as he watches Haydée ensnare his friend; but he is soon dissatisfied with his role of supercilious spectator and himself succumbs to her not so innocent charms. Rohmer's camera (the film is exquisitely shot in colour) observes it all with a splendid ironic detachment, cunningly changing the perspectives so that Adrien's egocentric pomposity is exploded by the images. A slight film, perhaps, but from a director who knows exactly what he wants to do, and does it with a fine intelligence.

Serge Roullet's *Le Mur*, on the other hand, falls finally because it doesn't know what to do with itself. Adapted from the short story by Sartre (and approved by him) about three Spanish Republicans condemned to death by the Falangists, Roullet's film (his first) is sober, reticent and instantly reminiscent of Bresson's *Un Condamné à Mort*. Its weakness is simply its length: after an hour in the dimly-lit death cell one began to see the impossibility of making a full-length film out of what is essentially a meditation.

Major talking-point of the festival, of course, was the German renaissance, and both the German entries confirmed an impression that the babes are still not out of the wood. *Tätowierung (Tattooing)*, a first feature by television director Johannes Schaaf, was marginally the better of the two. For his theme Schaaf treads that dangerous path of troublesome adolescence. A 16-year-old boy, unhappy in his home for delinquents, finds a new home with adoptive parents. Misunderstood by his new 'father', who bends over backwards trying to understand him, the boy finds a temporary soul-mate in the couple's niece; but his happiness is short-lived, and on an impulse he shoots his adoptive father, runs to a swimming-pool, strips off and feels free at last. Before things begin to go overboard, Schaaf displays something of the technical self-confidence that one saw in Kluge's *Abschied von Gestern*, and his observation of the total lack of communication between boy and man is uncomfortably ironic (though his point about the way the Wall has established itself as Berlin's number one tourist attraction, which the Berliners appreciated, seemed to me too pat by half). But the film falls flat on its face with its final sequence, and the heavy symbolism totally undermines the earlier understatement.

Much the same can be said of Ulrich Schamoni's *Alle Jahre wieder (Every Year Again)*, whose unflattering picture of the people of Münster in Westphalia (every foreigner's view of the beer and sausages German) outraged the Berlin audiences. Schamoni's film, about a successful businessman who is separated from his wife but goes through the ritual of a family Christmas while parking his girl-friend in a hotel, is an outright attack on the blind complacency that followed in the wake of the economic miracle. The cross-cutting between the girl at the hotel and the tired exchange of pleasantries

round the family Christmas tree is sometimes effective. But any subtlety in the script is sunk without trace amid the stream of easy witticisms at the expense of the characters, and the seemingly universal German obsession with their national deficiencies (there is actually a cut-away to a boy scout troop on the march). Schamoni—and some of his compatriots—may make better films when they realise that the Germans have no monopoly in complacency.

Of the rest, the less said the better. Leggy fashion models and audacious youth were much in evidence. It was not so much that these films were bad (most of them had something), simply that none of them were very good. Worth mentioning, though, was the Danish *The Story of Barbara*, about an actress at the crossroads: quietly and intelligently directed by Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt, and a charming performance from Yvonne Ingdal as the actress. And from Holland Franz Weisz' *Illusion—a Gangstergirl*, about a successful novelist writing the screenplay for the film of his book—insuperably pretentious, but what little we saw of the film-within-the-film looked fascinating. In the film market another Danish film, *The Dreamers*, a highly original and often very funny variation on the *ménage à trois* theme, directed with wild abandon by an ex-critic, Kirsten Stenbæk.

This, then, was not a vintage year at Berlin. But there was always the Retrospective to turn to, and Lubitsch and Langdon between them managed to dispel some of the gloom. National Film Theatre audiences will have had the chance to see the Langdon films in September: the season should do something to put Langdon on the map again. *Long Pants* and *The Strong Man* are acknowledged classics, but *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp* and *The Chaser* (directed by Langdon himself) deserve to be better known. Both of them bear ample witness to this underrated comic's genius for the slow-burn gag.

The Lubitsch films ranged from his early work in Germany to his Hollywood films of the late Twenties. Even in something as early as *Schuhpalast Pinkus* (1916) one can see Lubitsch's insolent wit in full play. Outstanding among the later German films were the uproarious *Die Austernprinzessin* (1919), and best of all *Die Bergkatze* (1921), a riot of invention with an astonishingly mercurial Pola Negri at the head of a pack of brigands on the snow slopes of the Alps, and memorable particularly for the rich, zany, rococo sets by Ernst Stern. As one of the characters in Schamoni's film said: "You can say what you like, the old films are the best." That, at least, drew some applause.

DAVID WILSON

MOSCOW

ANNIVERSARIES TEND to have more significance for the Soviet Union than simple sentimentality and fireworks, or even than the great red banners which, already in July, decked the streets to exhort the citizens to prove themselves worthy of 1917. Evidently it will be a time for taking stock of the first fifty years of the first Socialist State. In the socio-political field it would take a lot of foresight to read all the portents—to equate, for instance, the large advance in economic well-being and the increasingly articulate scepticism of the younger generation; which are two of one's dominant impressions of the changes of two years since the last Moscow Festival. In the arts the signs are clearer: the evolutions of the past decade are more or less continuous, if likely to be hastened by Anniversary Year. Soviet art history is evidently on the eve of recognising fully once more that unparalleled eruption of the avant-garde which marked practically every field of Soviet art in the Twenties, and then was so effectively suppressed by the narrower Stalinist doctrines of socialist realism, which rolled over it all like fire extinguisher foam. But you cannot celebrate Anniversary Year without recalling the years of heroic communism; and you cannot recall the heroic years without their heroes, among whom the artists figured largely and militantly.

There are all sorts of small but basic signs, like the confirmed rehabilitation of Vrubel, who was so important an inspiration to the avant-gardes of the generations after his death in 1910. Through the bad years some at least of the

ULRICH SCHAMONI'S "ALLE JAHRE WIEDER".



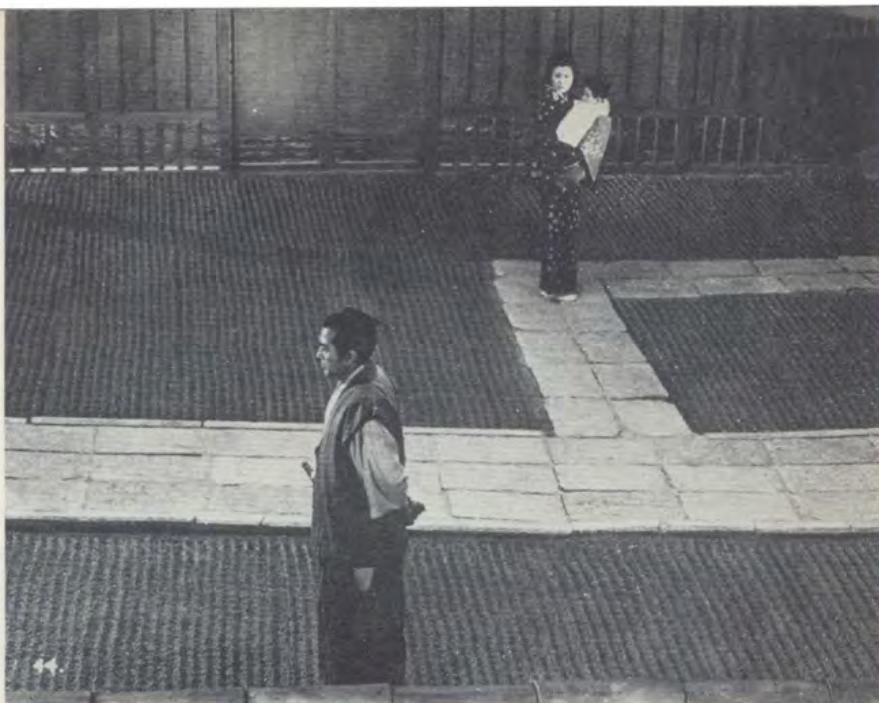
Tretyakov Gallery's Vrubels stayed on exhibition; but even recent guide-books pointed out the awful warnings of his retreat from realism. Now, however, the collection is prominent; Vrubel's crazed ceramics are creeping out into all sorts of public collections, and a lush new album of colour reproductions, with no moral attached, appears to have sold out practically on the day of its appearance.

Infinitely more significant, however, particularly for the theatre and the cinema, is the full reinstatement of Meierhold. The process began ten years ago almost to the day, when suddenly Meierhold's name was restored to the reference books, after seventeen years when his very existence had been denied. His work perhaps seemed at first potentially more dangerous than his name; and it was only gradually that we saw late and feeble reflections of Meierhold creeping into theatre productions. But this year is really Meierhold year. In the spring an exhibition of Soviet Theatre in the Manège gave Muscovites their first glimpse for years, by means of models, of what Meierhold's productions could look like. There was, for instance, a staggering, total-theatre constructivist design by El Lissitzky for a production of Sergei Tretyakov's *I Want a Baby*, intended for the new Meierhold Theatre which was never finished (it became the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall). This summer a vast volume of memoirs and photographs completely reinstates Meierhold as artist, stating unambiguously that the treason charges against him were false, and that he was executed only a few weeks after arrest. The Meierhold archive has been brought out of its twenty-seven year storage, and occupies a room at the Bakhrushin Theatre Museum.

The importance of all this is not simply the rediscovery, after a surprisingly effective job of suppression, of an artist of incalculable importance to the development of a modern theatre. Meierhold is inseparably linked with the whole avant-garde movement of the first two decades of the revolution; and other artists will have to be retrieved from the imposed oblivion. The early Soviet cinema, too, is likely to undergo certain revaluations as the irrational and debilitating old bogies of 'formalism' (a charge which has by now lost its terror, as well as its meaning) creep away.

Optimistically, one feels that a considerable new liberation in the arts must follow on the rediscovery of the enchanted years (for the artists) of heroic communism. It is overdue in the cinema, which has been going through a rather stodgy period, although there are reports of bright new talents working out in the republican studios, where a boy or girl just fresh from the Cinema Institute has a better chance of a free hand than in the larger, hierarchical studios of Moscow or Leningrad. For the moment it is hard to judge, as several of the most promising new films are being held until—or until after—the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations. The most talked about of these delayed films is Tarkovski's *Andrei Rublyov*, of which the general impression is that it is long and dull with occasional brilliant passages; and somewhat worrying to the authorities because of its rather pessimistically realistic account of Rublyov's Russia.

The new look of the main Soviet entry in the Festival, Sergei Gerassimov's *The Journalist*, was perhaps deceiving. To Soviet audiences, it is true, certain aspects seemed mildly startling: the touches of cosmopolitanism (some sequences were shot in Western Europe), the somewhat unflattering picture of Soviet provincial life; a hero of very equivocal moral qualities. But to those of us less involved, it seemed a long (three hours) and talky picture, as old-fashioned, beneath the veneer, in content as in style. *The Journalist* shared the Grand Prix *ex aequo* with Istvan Szabo's *The Father*. This is a deft and brilliant film which has more than enough invention and force to carry occasional lapses into naive effect, and which demonstrates how the best of the young Eastern directors are at the same time progressing beyond imitation of Western new waves, and escaping from the narrow limitations of 'socialist realism.' Szabo made a statement about his film which looked like a direct challenge to the more conservative official line: "(Such) films have to be approached in a different way and some audiences are still reluctant to accept them. But literature, music or paintings also have values that are not



KOBAYASHI'S "REBELLION".

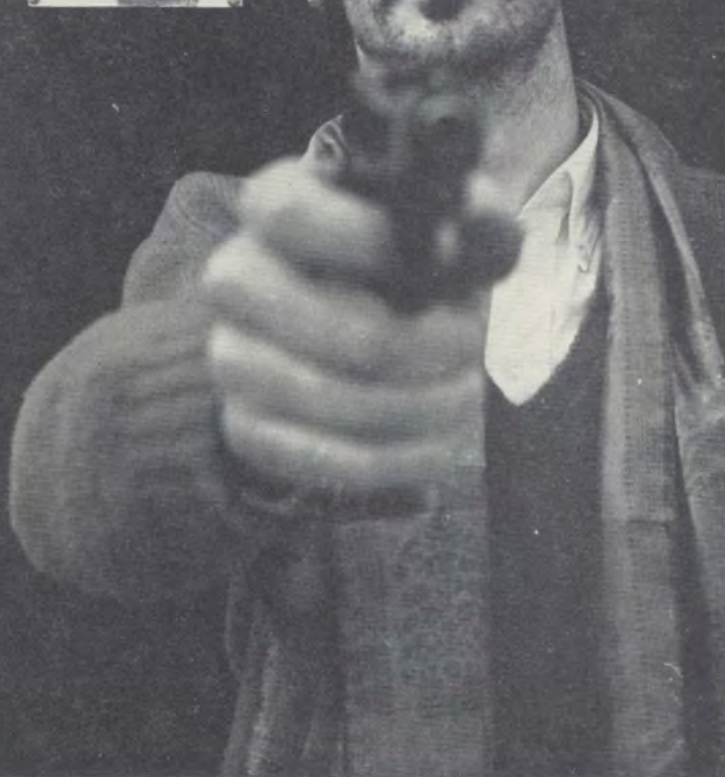
appreciated by all members of the public; yet their quality remains unchanged."

The Father, like *The Round-Up*, is a study in mythology. It is the story of a little boy whose father dies of a heart-attack, brought on by overwork, on the last day of the War. The timid and uncertain child finds support in creating a myth about his father's memory, inventing fantasy images of a partisan hero, a great surgeon, a political leader. His school friends share in the myth. His father's former possessions—his watch, his razor, his surgical instruments—have the potency of saintly relics. He grows up into the bewildering political shake-ups of the Fifties. The myths desert him. In a haunting, barely explained sequence, the father's body is exhumed and removed to another burial place. The boy has to discover reality and his own independence. The film closes with another elusive symbol. He decides to prove himself by swimming the Danube. "At last he was alone," says the commentary, which is used throughout with skilful irony. The camera rises to reveal, almost like a Keaton gag, a huge formation of swimmers following on the same endeavour.

I missed the Bulgarian film, *Detour*, directed by Grisha Ostrovski and Todor Stoyanov, which was highly spoken of. The Czech authorities, who seem currently to be rather unnerved in the face of the young Prague school, sent a film by the veteran director Otakar Vavra. *Romance for a Cornet* is based on a ballad about a country boy who falls in love with a girl from the fairground, who is promised to another. They part; later the boy learns that she has died. The slight romance seems unequal to the virtuosity which Vavra hangs about it: the cunning evocation of the atmospheres of a past time, a lost summer, the country nights and the flimsy show of the fairground. Vavra is known as a director who has always been able to adjust himself to changing fashions. It is hard to decide the direction of the influences implied in the leisurely and meticulous observation of behaviour which his film shares with the younger Czech artists.

The rest of the Eastern world produced nothing of outstanding interest. The Polish entry, Stanislaw Rozewicz's *Westerplatte*, is a decent study of men at war and of the philosophy of surrender, but it fails for want of strategical clarity in its account of the defence of Westerplatte and by its inherent lack of structure. From Yugoslavia, Vladan Slijepcevic's *The Protégé* (already seen at Venice last year) is mostly notable for its sidelights on the relationship of bureaucracy, careerism and culture in a socialist society. By far the most unpleasing film of the Festival was the East German *Bread and Roses* (directed by Heinz Thiel and Horst E. Brandt), an old-fashioned story of the training of a Communist to the necessity of unquestioning conformism.

If the East had comparatively little to show, the West could not claim to be brighter. *A Man for all Seasons* is sober and



"LA CHINOISE": LEX DE BRUIJN.

dignified, of course, but far too dependent on its text to make it a very happy choice for an international festival. The other English-speaking exhibits were the British *To Sir, With Love* and the American film, Robert Mulligan's *Up the Down Staircase*, whose content (tyro teacher; sink school) were practically duplicated. The British said that British schools were not at all like the British film; and the Americans said that American schools were not like the American one. The Russians, with a stronger sense of social discipline, said that no schools were like either of them anyway; but popular taste favoured the franker sentimentality of the British film. For my own part I prefer *Up the Down Staircase*, which does, I feel, momentarily capture a sense of the elusive teacher-pupil relationship.

Eventually the festival prize for oddity must go to the Cambodian entry, *The Enchanted Forest*, Prince Norodom Sihanouk's utopian travelogue picture of his own country. The Prince was producer, director, writer, composer and leading player; and in a message to the Press, disarmingly explained that he was often distracted by affairs of state during the fortnight he took to make the film. Surprisingly, in the circumstances, the film has a distinctive style: there is a consistent atmosphere of dream-like languor about its naive drivellings. In any case it is probably unique in demonstrating the idealised image which a head of state carries of his own country and people.

DAVID ROBINSON

One of the events of Moscow was the screening of the compilation made by Yutkevich and Kleimann from Eisenstein's Bezhin Meadow material. David Robinson discusses the whole history of Bezhin Meadow in an article which will appear in the January SIGHT AND SOUND.

VENICE

THE TROUBLE WITH festivals *à thème* is that any theme quickly tends to develop a stranglehold which leaves cinema panting by the wayside. Venice this year was devoted to a hazily specific sort of way to the problems of youth, society and actuality, or what one might grandly call the cinema of social confrontation. At its best this meant Godard and Bellocchio at grips with the thoughts of Chairman Mao; at its worst, all sorts of turgid statements about contemporary phenomena and fauna.

Hence, one assumes, the inclusion of a chatty commercial vehicle like Nanni Loy's *Il Padre di Famiglia*, in which a typical marital comedy is lumbered with a message when the wife (Leslie Caron) repairs to a mental home after years of childbirth and household chores. Hence, too, the presence of half-a-dozen first films whose only distinction—with the exception of *Dutchman* and *Tätowierung*, both reviewed elsewhere in *SIGHT AND SOUND*—was that they were first films. In fact, after a whole week in which one gloomily sat through constipated Godard imitations from Germany (Edgar Reitz' *Mahlzeiten* and Gustav Ehmck's *Spur eines Mädchens*), or solemn plods like Christian de Chalonge's *O Salto*, about Portuguese workmen illegally smuggled into France in search of jobs, one began to wonder when the festivities would begin.

Not, certainly, with Zoltan Fabri's much-touted *End of the Season*, in which a group of elderly jokers persuade one of their number that he is required for questioning by the police. The victim happens to have a conscience about two Jews he betrayed during the war; a good deal of the film is made up of his Fellini-ish guilty imaginings in which figures appear, disappear and merge into each other; and even when he finally discovers the truth about the joke, he still demands to be tried for his crime by his friends. Remove the Fellini bits, the speeded-up motion for the antics of the old men, the ugly jump cuts which jerk the action about in time, and one is left with a conventional *drame de conscience*; keep them, and one has an arty piece of pseudo-philosophising which leaves an uncomfortable tang in the mouth.

The first taste of real champagne came, ironically enough, from Kobayashi's *Rebellion*, a film rejected by the Festival selectors on the inscrutable grounds that it revealed nothing 'new' in its tale of an ageing samurai who opts for revolt when, two years after being forced to marry his son to his overlord's cast-off mistress, he is asked, for reasons of state, to separate the now blissfully happy couple. Like *Harakiri*, *Rebellion* is a blistering attack on the Japanese code of honour, violent, hieratic, and swelling steadily to a ferocious climax in one of those glittering sword battles for which the Japanese cinema has no rival. But this time the cold, geometrical precision of Kobayashi's style overlays a tender lyrical passion, and the result is as severely controlled and as volcanic as a cross between Racine and Shakespearean tragedy. With Toshiro Mifune giving one of his best performances in years as the samurai, immovable as the rock of ages in his serene opposition to the whole might of his clan, one has a film which, new or not, must be seen.

The Festival proper surfaced only on the seventh day with *La Cina è Vicina*, a film which not only confirms Bellocchio's exceptional talent but might almost be seen as a continuation of the curious, secretive family relationships in *Fists in the Pocket*. Much more talkative than the earlier film, *La Cina è Vicina* is a bitterly funny political satire, too complex to go into in the space available here (or for that matter after a single unsubtitled viewing). Briefly, though, a middle class socialist politician and his sister are trapped into marriage (for mixed reasons of revenge, love and self-advancement) by the former's working class secretaries, male and female; meanwhile their younger brother, an aesthetic adherent of the Chinese cultural revolution, throws every spanner he can think of into his brother's political works. The marivaudage of exchanged lovers and the younger brother's terrorist activities (a political meeting destroyed with one cat and three Alsations) are brilliantly done, but what strikes one most forcibly about the film is that the protagonists are again a

family; there is the same preoccupation with obsessive gesture and movement; the same sense of a private underworld with its own codes and secrets which no one else can share. Even though Bellocchio has brought his characters out of the epileptic isolation of *Fists in the Pocket* and into everyday society, they still remain, like Cocteau's enfants terribles, securely locked inside "la chambre".

Mao turns up again, of course, in Godard's *La Chinoise*; and needless to say those who admire will admire, those who do not will not. In a way his most uncompromising film to date—not excepting *Made in U.S.A.*—this is virtually a series of monologues and dialogues on the implications of the Chinese cultural revolution, liberally sprinkled with quotations from the little red bible of Chairman Mao and inserts of strip cartoon heroes from Lyndon Johnson to Captain America, as five pro-Chinese students in Paris discuss the possibilities of effecting a similar revolution through terrorism in the West. Godard is too honest, and probably too unsure of his own position, to propose any solutions or even affirmations (his politics are the films he makes); and the only one of the group (Anne Wiazemsky) who moves into action by assassinating the visiting Russian minister for culture, ends in disaster: she reads his room number upside down in the hotel register and shoots the wrong man. And the core of the film is a long, brilliant dialogue with the journalist Francis Jeanson, who demonstrates (earlier on) the impossibility of a revolution imposed by a handful of terrorists on an indifferent French nation.

"Il faut confronter les idées vagues avec des images claires," proclaims a mural slogan early on in the film. And the first dialogue takes place off-screen as we watch an empty room: an 'image claire', untroubled, shot in sharp, brilliant colours, with the furniture arranged in neat, neutral formality. Yet this room, unreal as an unfinished stage set, is the one shared by the group, who each have a very real existence; and it is in fact the foundation for a series of dialectical opposites (fact/fiction) which are at the root of all Godard's work. Watching Lumière and Méliès today, the actor in the group (Jean-Pierre Léaud) argues, one realises that Lumière, the recorder of reality, was really an impressionist painter; so Méliès the Magician may... perhaps... have filmed reality. So Godard, evoking the Vietnam war, can pose a girl in a lampshade hat in front of a poster of the Esso tiger—napalm brand—paint her face with synthetic blood, assault her with toy aeroplanes on strings, and still evoke a greater sense of reality and terror than a newsreel.

Like *La Cina è Vicina*, *La Chinoise* demands close, extensive analysis. Meanwhile I will only add that Léaud's plaintive quest for "la tendresse" from *Masculin Féminin* reappears here, no longer plaintive but accepted as hopeless. His first attempt to effect a revolution in language, "to talk as if words were sounds and matter," ends full circle with "Je t'aime, tu sais," spoken as if the words were sound and matter but still retaining their painful yearning. And in a remarkable sequence, Anne Wiazemsky the terrorist shows him how to succeed. "Il faut lutter sur deux fronts," she explains, starting the record-player. As the music tenderly echoes Léaud's love, she tells him she no longer loves him, that he bores her, that she hates his sweaters, and then she stops the record: and we are left to watch him fighting on two fronts, against the music and against her words.

Two other films require mention. I seem to have developed an allergy to Pasolini in his last two films, and it continues with his contemporary-significance version of *Edipo Re*. This begins brilliantly with a modern-dress prologue, a glowing, ominous montage of green fields, rustling trees and stately mansions, as a child is born and the father stares apprehensively into its eyes. Then a sudden cut into some distant but unspecified past, and things go wild with everybody dressed up in goatskins, long false beards and large tin hats, while Franco Citti as Oedipus rants and screams in imitation of a Japanese samurai star. The rocky landscapes and bright, hot colours are often very striking, and Silvana Mangano has her moments as a mask-faced Jocasta. Pasolini fans had better wait and see.

There is little doubt, though, that Jack Clayton's *Our Mother's House* is a film gone wrong. Again it begins promisingly with the group of children faced by their mother's death deciding to bury her secretly in the garden so that they won't be packed off to the orphanage. Soon, however, they begin to display an alarming variety of accents (not to mention distressing cutenesses and bad acting-school habits), and when Dirk Bogarde enters, doing a rich Bill Sykes act as the long-lost wicked father to a predominantly genteel family, the whole structure collapses. It might have worked as a Gothic melodrama, but Clayton labours to keep both feet in reality, and it just doesn't work at all.

As always at Venice over the last four years, the Retrospective (devoted to the silent Western) was packed with good things, from some stunning early Ince films to Rin Tin Tin as a tamed wolf wearing a false beard so that nobody will recognise him. So many good things that it deserves—and barring accidents will get—an article to itself in the near future. Then, in addition to a Carl Mayer retrospective, there was a nightly *hommage* to Walt Disney, sometimes almost obscenely sugary (*Merbabies*), sometimes deliriously funny (Pluto and a pestiferous crane in *Cold Storage*), and sometimes astonishing to anyone not old enough to remember how inventive and attractive the early Disneys were. *Melody*, in particular, looks remarkably similar in style to the early U.P.A. cartoons which were hailed for their innovation.

A final benediction: I had to leave before the screening of Visconti's *Lo Straniero*, but Buñuel's *Belle de Jour*, extolled by Elliott Stein elsewhere in this issue, is everything he says (more, if possible). A great, great film: scabrous, scandalous, fantastically pure beauty. Properly, it took the festival Grand Prix.

TOM MILNE

"LA CINA È VICINA": ELDA TATTOLI AND DANIELA SURINA.



BUNUEL'S GOLDEN BOWL

Elliott Stein



"No more cinema for me—
not in Spain, not in France. Nowhere.
Belle de Jour is my
last film."

MOST OF ALL, Buñuel wanted to go back to work in Spain again. He had been encouraged by reports that the brouhaha over *Viridiana* had calmed, that censorship there had been relaxed. He returned. Then, after months of preparation, in the summer of 1963, Franco's government refused the shooting authorisation for his version of Galdos' *Tristana*. Later that year, in France, he made one of his finest films, *Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre*. When shown in Paris, in 1964, it was coolly received. A year later, one of his old pet projects, an adaptation of Lewis's *The Monk*, was finally about to take shape. At the last minute the production company was dissolved, and it too had to be written off. The Hakim Brothers then approached Buñuel to ask him to consider a screen version of Joseph Kessel's novel, *Belle de Jour*. He accepted, and cloistered himself in an ultra-modern building in Madrid with Jean-Claude Carrière (co-scenarist on *Le Journal* and *The Monk*). They finished the script in five weeks. The shooting schedule for this, Buñuel's 27th film, was ten weeks. He brought it in in eight.

Belle de Jour is a masterpiece, technically Buñuel's most accomplished, free-flowing work. It is unique, the only one of his films in which his obsessions, his purity, and his convulsive spirit have all been fully, satisfactorily organised into an architectonic whole. It unfolds so smoothly, with such sustained legato, that there is no chance to catch a breath. *Viridiana* was a step in this direction, the underrated *Journal* a near-arrival. *Belle* is the many-faceted and perfect Golden Bowl which crowns a life's work. When released in Paris recently, it was greeted with shock, reticence and disappointment by most of the critics for the daily and weekly papers. The great man, tired, deaf, 67 years old and alcoholic (his own admission), now only wants to return to Mexico and rest.

* * *

Joseph Kessel's novel, published in 1929, whipped up a fair *succès de scandale* at the time. Although Buñuel has said of it: "La novela no me gusta nada," it is a far from uninteresting book, firmly in the tradition of the French *roman psychologique*, and a precursor of the post-war, but already classic *Histoire d'O*. It concerns a beautiful young *grande bourgeoisie*, Séverine Sérizy, wife of a handsome young surgeon (Pierre) whom she deeply loves. She has every reason to be happy, but of course isn't. She learns that an acquaintance, a woman of her own class, is working in a brothel. Séverine gradually becomes obsessed by the thought of such a situation, finds out the address of one of these bagnios, and applies for a job there. She only works afternoons from two to five—thus her sobriquet, Belle de Jour. Frigid in the arms of her kindly, well-behaved husband, she is impelled by a masochistic urge for humiliation which leads her to seek out 'rough trade'. Marcel, a doting young gangster, falls in love with her; she soon becomes very fond of him. The devoted hoodlum attempts to kill a friend of her husband who is about to inform Pierre of Séverine's double life. The murder misfires when Pierre intervenes, and it is he who is seriously wounded. He recovers, but is paralysed, condemned to a wheelchair. Overcome by guilt, Séverine confesses everything. Pierre never speaks to her again.

Kessel elevates this novelettish plot through a convincing portrayal of the frightening divorce between the heart and the senses. In 1936, Philippe Hériat adapted the book for the stage. The play was rejected by sixteen theatre directors and as many actresses. It is a sentimental watering-down of the novel, with an unconvincing happy ending. It has never been performed; with luck, it never will be.

Although Buñuel does not fancy the novel (he didn't like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* much either), he stated: "I found it interesting to try to make something I would like, starting from something I didn't . . . I enjoyed complete freedom during the shooting of *Belle*, and consider myself entirely responsible for the result." He took pains with the editing, modifying several sequences in the process—a procedure rare for him. Hindered often in the past by tight budgets, his only inconvenience here was the producers' insidious auto-censorship; several cuts were made by them before *Belle* was sent to the censors.

Buñuel's last great film is close in spirit to his first great film, *L'Age d'Or*. Indeed, one of the things in *Belle de Jour* which seems to have bothered people is its fidelity to what can only be called the true spirit of surrealism: not the tacky Surrealism to be found in the moth-eaten commemorative art shows which have popped up from time to time in Paris, London or New York art galleries since the war, but the invigorating, positive, liberating surrealism which marked *L'Age d'Or*, caused riots when that film was first shown, and resulted in its being banned for a generation. The result is more mellow, less overtly aggressive than *L'Age d'Or*, even calm. But it is all there.

Buñuel: "*Belle de Jour* is a pornographic film . . . by that I mean chaste eroticism."

* * *

The film contains threads of events from Kessel's book. But Buñuel has turned the book inside out, ripped the surface from it, and stitched inside to outside with such invisible mending that much of the time the heroine's real life, her fantasies and childhood memories, are integrated as a fluent story in which past, present, and the merely possible form a solid block of narrative. With her, we fall through trapdoors of consciousness, and then with relief, fall out of them—but only into new ones.

Buñuel did not like the novel's ending, "because morality is saved." The climax of his film is simply the most astonishing 'open ending' in the history of the cinema. It is the meanest trapdoor of them all (half open?—half shut?), a renewal of the beginning; but once seen, it fastens the entire film into a writhing subliminal image, that of an admirable circular serpent, forever catching its own tail in its own mouth.

The film's motifs are not those of the book. Kessel tells the story of a woman who loves one man with her heart, and a few dozen others with her body—and feels badly about it. Buñuel sidesteps sin and guilt; for him they are obviously luxuries the human race has been burdened with for too long. His film (the theme is far from new to him) tells the story of a liberation from the moral handcuffs of social caste by means of a personal *sacerdoce*, a self-fulfilment.

* * *

During the main credit titles, an open landau trots down a pleasant country lane towards the camera. Inside it, Pierre (Jean Sorel) and Séverine (Catherine Deneuve) are cosily enlaced. She tells her husband that she loves him more each day. Suddenly, he orders the coachman to stop and his wife to descend. The lackeys drag her through the woods. At Pierre's command, she is gagged, bound to a tree, whipped, etc. by the servants. "What are you thinking of?" an off-screen voice asks. "Of us," Séverine replies to Pierre. "We were in a landau." They are in the bedroom of their Paris apartment.

A few days later, at a mountain ski resort, they meet Pierre's friend (Father Lizzardi from *La Mort en ce Jardin* and Monteil from *Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre*), here called Husson (Michel Piccoli). "He's rich and lazy. That's his sickness," a woman friend remarks. Returning from her holidays, Séverine learns that a young married woman of her 'group' works in a clandestine brothel. (Clandestine because Kessel's novel, like France, has been modernised, and *maisons de rendezvous* are no longer legal.) Husson, met one day at the country club, insists on supplying her with details about 'the houses' he has known. After days of hesitation spent obsessed by troublesome thoughts, Séverine goes *chez* Madame Anaïs (Geneviève Page), and as she climbs the stairs



"BELLE DE JOUR": CATHERINE DENEUVE.

to the brothel for the first time, we come upon a little girl in church (Séverine as a child?) refusing the host. The priest is impatient: "Get it down you!" Séverine does get herself enrolled in the brothel, and returns that very afternoon to begin work—all gleaming patent leather shoes Buñuelian style on the stairs.

She is recalcitrant with her first customer, an obese bonbon magnate, but when he and Anaïs get tough with her, she becomes joyfully submissive. One busy day, her list of clients includes a truckling gynaecologist, who has come *chez Anaïs* for the same reason as Séverine—to be humiliated. She cannot cope with him, but is pleased to be manhandled by a huge Japanese who tries to pay with a Geisha Diner's Card. We then see her seated demurely, enjoying the fresh air in an elegant outdoor café near the Cascade in the Bois de Boulogne, where Bresson's *Dames* were wont to meet. (At the next table, too thin to be Hitchcock, is a Spanish tourist, Senor Buñuel, talking business with one of the Hakim Brothers.) She is approached by the one-time leading man of *La Mort en ce Jardin* and *Cela s'appelle l'Aurore* (Georges Marchal). He is wearing no make-up and looks like a weird old French Duke. He asks Séverine if she likes money, and tells her that, indeed, he is a rich Duke. He invites her home for "a very moving religious ceremony." They are driven to his château by the two footmen who had whipped her at Pierre's command right after the main credit titles. The Duke dresses her up as his dead daughter, covers her with asphodels, mutters something about "the inebriating odour of dead flowers," then disappears under the coffin for a part of the service which the producers removed before submitting the film to General de Gaulle's censor board. When the ceremony is terminated, she is paid for her pains and kicked out into the rain.

One day at the brothel, the Nazarin (Francisco Rabal), who

has become a Bolivian gangster, arrives with a young protégé, Marcel (Pierre Clementi). They have just robbed a bank messenger (bringing the profits from the latest Vadim film?) in the lift leading to the Hakim Brothers' office, 79 Champs-Élysées, and are loaded with money to spend on pretty women. Marcel falls in love with Séverine and returns often to see her. She develops a strong physical passion for the hysterical punk, although she still loves her husband.

Marcel discovers Belle's secret identity, invades her home, shoots her husband, and is pursued and killed by the police. Pierre recovers. He is paralysed, has lost the power of speech, and will spend the rest of his days in a wheelchair. One beautiful autumn afternoon, Séverine is seen giving her husband his medicine. Then, looking out of the window of her splendid Paris apartment, she sees in the pane the reflection of the pleasant country lane (leading to the Duke's château?) where the landau was driving in the opening sequence. "I don't dream any more—since your accident," she lies to Pierre lovingly. She then hears Buñuelian cowbells (first heard in 1930 in *L'Age d'Or* when Lya Lys, on discovering a huge cow on the bed of her splendid Paris apartment, chased the *vache* off the *lit*, looked into a mirror, and saw moving clouds and a vision of *her* lover). Pierre rises from his wheelchair. He is no longer a cripple, he can speak, he pours a drink. "Let's take a vacation, go to the mountains." "Do you hear?" she replies, and looking out of her Paris window we see the open landau in the country landscape. The coachmen from the opening scene are driving it down the country lane, towards Pierre and Séverine. It has come to take them to the Château?

* * *

This summary does even less than skeletal justice to the complex enchantments of *Belle de Jour*. Before moving on to a discussion of the reaction it provoked, here, at random, is a

brief of particulars which after three viewings of the film stand out strongly:

—Geneviève Page as Madame Anaïs: one of the great performances of the screen in recent years; and most uncanny it is, since the role, as written, is rather one-dimensional.

—None of the film's 'fantasies' are in the book—the girl refusing the host is of course plumb Buñuel. He discards, however, a ferociously Buñuelian item which occurs at the beginning of Kessel's novel. During the last days at winter sports, Séverine falls ill; by the time she returns to her Paris home, a near-fatal case of pneumonia has developed. And it is at *this* point that she begins to be aware of her disquieting sensuality, after the doctors "have delivered her body to the bites of leeches."

—When the bonbon magnate (Francis Blanche) invites the girls at the house to drink a bottle of champagne with him, the sequence is so superbly articulated, although unostentatiously edited, that its climax, as the cork pops (a miraculously 'right' placed high-angle group shot), physically imposes itself as a major moment in the film, even though the scene itself is of relatively little importance. There is no precedent in Buñuel's work for such a purely formal 'state of grace'.

—It is early in the film. Séverine returns home, after the disturbing taxi ride during which brothels were discussed. Flowers are brought in, sent by Husson. She drops the vase. "What's the matter with me today?" she mutters. Until this point, colour in the film has been cool and non-committal. Now, the visual shock of the red roses sprawled on the floor is tremendous—out of all proportion to the apparent seriousness of the incident. A chromatic premonition. As if she had opened a tin of sardines and a live cobra had popped out.

* * *

A few years ago, when another masterpiece, Dreyer's *Gertrud*, had its world première in Paris, kilometres of indignation, abuse, and downright foolishness were spat out into print. History has repeated itself with *Belle de Jour*—right down to *Cahiers du Cinéma* belatedly tipping the scales back to sanity again (*Cahiers* 191, 192) with articles more cogent and perceptive; above all, less concerned with protecting Paris concierges from the mischievous productions of dirty old Danish and Spanish cinéastes.

Positif, in its July issue, also counter-attacks with a first-page editorial: "The brilliant brains of our critics manifested in chorus the disappointment caused them by *Belle de Jour* . . . thus proving the softening of their own cortexes. This united front of mediocrities was just the most recent attack on one of Buñuel's best films. The producers had already taken up the censor's shears themselves and adulterated it. In our next number we will run the articles the film deserves, but as of now, we would like to assure all of the above gentlemen of our hearty scorn."

What had the "above gentlemen" said? Here are a few pearls:

Garson in *L'Aurore*: "The ensemble is indecorous." Baroncelli in *Le Monde*: "... prosaic . . . mediocrity . . . platitude . . . One can't believe that such bad dreams could go on inside Catherine Deneuve's pretty head." [It is precisely because Buñuel knows better than anyone else what *can* go on inside pretty heads that his casting of the part is perfect. Deneuve's glacial in-gazing is a wondrous sight. She often looks as impressively opaque as Ingres' 'La Grande Odalisque'; sometimes like *Marnie* reading between the lines in *Alice in Wonderland*. The more Séverine the *grande bourgeoisie* 'degrades' herself, the more beautiful and blooming the actress becomes. Her finest role.]

Mohrt in *Carrefour*: "The average moviegoer's disappointment is justified." [The average moviegoer has made *Belle de Jour* into one of the biggest box-office successes of the year. It has just entered its third month of unbroken first run showings at three of Paris's largest cinemas.]

Marcabru in *Arts*: "A radical-socialist film . . . short of

breath and heart . . . This director has benefited from a sympathy from the critics so excessive that it's close to blindness . . . Buñuel has fallen on his face two times out of three for many years. He has been given the benefit of the doubt because of his age—he shouldn't take advantage of it."

Henry Chapier in *Combat*: "Buñuel has lost Kessel's generous sentimentality, the marvellous way Kessel knows how to make vice sympathetic." [Buñuel needs sentimentality like Titian needed colour-blindness. He has never been concerned with vice as such—he may not even know what it is. If he has read Chapier, he may know now: pushing sentimentality is vice.]

M. Chapier again: "Upper middle-class Parisian women are no longer restrained by sexual taboos, and we could only believe such a story if it were taking place in Spain . . . or at most in Bordeaux or Rouen." [Is French Puritanism such a thing of the past? Far from it. It is merely something foreign tourists, their eyes filled with postcard visions of Pigalle *filles de joie*, can't be expected to know about, and something most Frenchmen, their eyes filled with Fifth Republic State TV homilies, prefer to ignore. It was, after all, only a few weeks ago—in 1967—that a French law dating from 1922, making it a criminal offence to disseminate any information in favour of birth control, was finally abrogated. It was under the current Gaullist regime, and while the far side of the moon was being photographed, that the hoary works of Havelock Ellis were banned in France. If all the excellent books outlawed under 'Aunt Yvonne's' reign of public morality were put on shelves, they would constitute a rich modern library. Where does M. Chapier find his unrestrained upper-class Parisian women? He may have been seeing too many old Lubitsch films laid in Paris.]

* * *

All of the boys had a really hard time finding their way out of the last reel. Georges Sadoul is an old friend of the director, and don't get him wrong, he does *like* the film, but it's certainly a good thing "Buñuel put a lot of humour in it . . . otherwise certain sequences would be nauseating." Sadoul thinks that Séverine's husband just gets well at the end. Aubrian in *Candide* tells us that Pierre was only pretending to be wounded—in a dream. And Marcel Martin, in *Cinéma* 67, strains at an imaginary gnat and swallows ten camels. For him much of the film is dream, but since Buñuel is satirising bourgeois characters, the dialogue is banal on purpose and the colour is mediocre (in truth Sacha Vierny's autumnal Eastman Colour camerawork is superb), because naughty Séverine must have been looking at some faded old blue films before the story started. This 'coloured' her thoughts!

Only one strong sensible voice has so far been heard in this wilderness of obfuscation: Jean-André Fieschi, in a refreshingly sane piece in *Cahiers* which presents a well-reasoned argument against "a unilateral reading of the film."

Indeed, it is impossible and unnecessary to decide whether the end of *Belle de Jour* conveys a shift from fantasy to reality or vice versa. The ambiguity is as immanent in the film, as deliberately Buñuel's, as the tranquil nobility of his point of view—a decent neutrality which condemns no one. He does not side with Séverine, nor can he regard her as a pervert. She has her reasons; but so does everyone else. Neither he nor his heroine wastes a minute worrying about Divine punishment. In accepting herself, Séverine liberates herself. She is no longer *une grande bourgeoisie*, but a human being who has undergone a shattering and enchanting apprenticeship. But instead of a Hollywood style clinch at fadeout time, we and she can content ourselves with visions of Séverine, joyful handmaiden at her husband's wheelchair-side and (or) riding with Pierre in the magic lantern of her mind down a beautiful country lane, where at any moment he may stop the carriage and deal her the merely divinely human punishment which to her is another name for love.

IN THE PICTURE

This Year at Marienbad

"Exec. committee of Italy's Association of Cinema Journalists last week protested Czech parliamentary action in singling out film directors Vera Chytilova and Jan Nemec as unworthy of state aid that helped finance their 'instruments of anarchy'. Italo film critics and commentators called the Czech request for an investigation an affront to creative freedom that threatens the careers of two of the most prominent figures among young Czech moviemakers . . ." (*Variety*, July 19th, 1967)

THE SUCCESS of Czech films in the West is suspicious, and cinematic Prague in 1967 is bleak and forbidding. On top of the conflict of generations, the Czech filmmakers are fighting the still hard-frozen orthodoxy of Marxist faith. The clash is between those in power, hardened in the 1939-45 cauldron and the post-war ashes, and the generation that was on the school bench during Stalinism and, as they bitterly say, had to learn everything over again. Why is Vera Chytilova's *The Daisies* a smash hit in New York? (*Time* was moved to write that it "looks and sounds like something concocted by a den member of America's own underground cinema clique.") Why does Venice Festival director Luigi Chiarini absolutely want Jan Nemec's new film? The best reason the Establishment can find is political, and the result is obvious and Freudian: a tightening of the reins.

"Forman is forgiven; he brings in dollars," say his fellow directors. But to illustrate and underline the contradiction and schizophrenia they add that *A Blonde in Love* has not yet been seen in the Soviet Union. "It'll come out in Moscow this winter after the 50th Anniversary ceremonies," they grin knowingly, "along with those Russian pictures that may disturb the serenity: *Andrei Rublyov* about the icon painter, *Day Star* about Stalinist repression, and cult-of-the-individual pictures such as *Rain in July*."

In Czechoslovakia memories still linger of the Party furore and parliamentary debate that followed the release (art houses only) of Ewald Schorm's first feature *Everyday Courage*. This tale of a young worker losing his faith in the 'social reality' was the more acid in that it had a character

refusing to take part in national festivities—exactly as Schorm did himself on one occasion. His latest feature, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, at present running at one Prague art house, is the story of the rehabilitation of a successful architect who has attempted suicide. As the intimate, low-key and somewhat *fauché* film advances, the audience realises that nothing is exceptional and the ending shows a solution that really isn't one. Is there another? The film looks for answers but doesn't propose any.

Jan Nemec is considered the extremist of the group: a 29-year-old former poet whose screen projects for Kafka and Tolstoy adaptations are forever turned down by the Barrandov authorities. "*The Martyrs of Love* is a defence of timid and unsuccessful people," says Nemec about his third picture, at present running in one Prague cinema and still (as of July 20th) without an export licence. "I just want to show that you can suffer and desire things different from the

so-called basic world problems, and that everyone has a right to the freedom of giving way to personal feelings." In his film, three ordinary, timid people dream of extraordinary and sublime love—an office-worker, a chambermaid, and an ugly duckling invited to a garden party by mistake. Its style is a homage to old comedies and salon melodrama; perhaps for security's sake, it's laid in a vague pre-1914 world of begonia-scented suburban gardens and empty streets with streetcar tracks.

Jiri Menzel, also 29, is the only director of the group who will begin a picture this year, starting *Capricious Summer* in September at Barrandov Studios. And another of the group, Antonin Masa, has finished his first film, *Hotel for Strangers*, the story of a poet and his sweetheart who discover while staying at the Hotel World that people continually play parts and that a stand must be made for sincerity. "I tried to make the picture on two planes," says Masa, "a

MILOS FORMAN'S "LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE". PHOTOGRAPH BY TIBOR BORSKY.



detective story plot and underneath a philosophical allegory . . ." Rather significantly, *Hotel for Strangers* is also 'distantiated' for added comfort to pre-1914.

The young Czechs are light years away from the boy-loves-tractor tradition, making films that project worlds of fantasy and create metaphors the more troubling in that Marx and Lenin never thought Communists would encounter them. And this autumn they will mount a first skirmish for freedom of existential search and the right to join the Western thinking man's groping for answers for "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola." "Freedom of expression is indivisible and the repression of one is the repression of all," is their dialectical battle slogan, and they intend to bypass the Central Committee of the Communist Party and carry their plea to the Government. The move is clever since the Central Committee, *de facto* ruler of the country's ideology, has no constitutional existence.

"The beginning was films about judicial errors; stories about poor guys sent to jail by bureaucratic injustice," one Czech told me. "Now one can say there are two directions: the realistic school of Milos Forman and Ivan Passer, and the probing into fantasy and the unexplored. Forman has the larger public, but is also now digging deeper." Forman has just finished a comedy, *Like a House on Fire*, co-produced by Carlo Ponti. "It's the story of a firemen's dance in a small Sudeten village where everything goes wrong, but it goes much further than *A Blonde in Love*," says Schorm. Forman has no intention of following the young Poles into international movie-making, feeling that he is, after all, freer in Czechoslovakia. He has a vague project with Claude Lelouch, and other Prague rumours have it that he may make a film with Jerry Lewis titled *The Americans are Coming*.

Conclusion? The little yellow station at Mariánské Lázně in Bohemia, where the slow and dreary Prague-Munich express makes a ten-minute stop. *Last Year in Marienbad* was a dead end, I thought as the train pulled out and the château glittered indifferently on a hilltop. Maybe the road does go through Marienbad.

AXEL MADSEN

Ireland for the Irish

IRELAND, IN THE OPINION of John Huston, ought to have a film industry of its own. He has been saying this for some time, but early in July he managed to corner the Taoiseach (pronounced Tea-sack) and some of his Ministers at Glencree, in the Wicklow Mountains. Members of the Irish Government had been invited to the location of Huston's latest film *Sinful Davey*, the story of the fortunes of a romantic Scottish highwayman. "The only excuse," said Huston disarmingly, "for filming it in Ireland is that I like to be here and my associates, who know this, are humouring me."

But Huston is an Irish citizen and he takes the matter of an Irish film industry with great seriousness. His words at Glencree showed how much he had been influenced by what he had just seen in Sweden. Small countries could make decent films and they did not have to be super-productions like *Sinful Davey*. Indeed, the sort of pictures he had in mind, to be financed partly by the Government, partly perhaps by cinema owners, and partly by private capital, would have a quarter of the budget and be made with a handful of technicians—as in Sweden where, he added



BETTE DAVIS AS THE MONSTROUS MRS. TAGGART IN "THE ANNIVERSARY", DIRECTED BY ROY BAKER AND ADAPTED FROM BILL MACILWRAITH'S PLAY.

thoughtfully, film technicians "get higher salaries than those in any other place not excepting Hollywood itself."

Huston dangled before the Ministers the value of films in promoting trade and tourism as well as representing Ireland and things Irish abroad. ("It is likely that John Ford's *Quiet Man* has attracted as many tourists as Bord Failte with all its inducements.") But it was in the employment of Ireland's great reservoir of artistic talent that the beginning of a native film industry was most important.

A board should be set up, said Huston, to take things further. It should decide on a programme of, say, six modest budget pictures. The aim should be higher than "purely commercial targets": creative and artistic values and the education of young Irishmen in the film business must have priority. Huston invited the Minister of Education to send students to follow the making of *Sinful Davey*. Later, places should be sought at European film schools. Ministers went away to ponder. It is understood that Lord Lloyd's National Film School report when it appeared later in the month was eagerly read at Dublin Castle.

IAN WRIGHT

A.F.I.

THE IDEA OF AN American Film Institute has been under discussion for just about as long as the idea of a British National Film School. Now Britain has moved one step nearer to its School; and America, as of last June, has acquired its Institute. The headquarters is to be in Washington (about a cricket-pitch length, one gathers, from the White House); the director is George Stevens Jr., who since 1962 has been running the film programme of the USIA; and the new Institute is described as a "non-profit, non-government corporation."

Money—the Institute starts with a five million dollar budget for its first three years—comes from the National Endow-

ment for the Arts (America's Arts Council), and from the Ford Foundation, the Motion Picture Association of America, and other sources yet to be announced. A 22-man board of trustees is headed by Gregory Peck.

A flurry of high-level pronouncements ushered in the new Institute. "It is heartening that this new organisation will be dedicated to stimulating progress and excellence in the film art" (President Johnson). "The endurance of excellence in motion pictures will be the prime objective of the American Film Institute" (Jack Valenti of the MPAA). "The Ford Foundation is confident that the leadership of Mr. Peck and his group and of Mr. Stevens will make the . . . Institute of real significance in the continuing development of film as an art" (McGeorge Bundy).

The critics, however, had got in first, moving Mr. Peck to comment that "this is the only thing I have been connected with where the reviews have come in before we opened." The inevitable charge, as *Variety* put it: "that Hollywood will be accused of, and will deny, dominating the Institute," to the possible detriment of underground, *avant garde*, film society and other non-commercial interests.

As announced, the Institute's plans sound solidly educational. It intends to concentrate on the training of film-makers (through a kind of élite corps, drawn from university film department graduates); on "assisting the development and improvement" of film education; on publications such as film-making textbooks. It does not propose to start its own Archive, but to act as "a focal point for coordination." It hopes to move into production, envisaging involvement in features as well as shorts.

Variety, foreseeing that this last activity, if it gets too experimental, "could spell political trouble with Bible belt congressmen who must approve appropriations for future federal grants," philosophically decided that George Stevens Jr. faces "a task of great complexity and infinite

dispute." Mr. Stevens himself, in London on a recent visit, had the air of a man walking in a wary, *Shane*-like way through a barrage of advice, proposals and counter-proposals. He wasn't, naturally, prepared to go much beyond the official statements in discussing just what the new Institute intended to do first. But he left one feeling rather encouraged that this new whiz kid among Film Institutes is going to be run by a second-generation film man.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

New Cinema at Pesaro

FILM FESTIVALS HAVE a tendency to the schizoid—Berlin and Moscow with their split between politics and normal festival preoccupations; Cannes with its wider split between art and commerce. But the Pesaro Festival of New Cinema is almost clinically schizophrenic. On the one hand, the competition is restricted to first films. Unfortunately, there are rarely fourteen good new first films—certainly not this year—so the festival falls back on that other line: representation. That is to say, it will choose the least bad of, say, the new Bulgarian films, in order to show us what, in Robert Benchley's immortal words, "they're doing down in Bulgaria." I suppose this is a good idea in principle, but after quite a few really terrible films, one began to have doubts.

On the other hand, the Pesaro Festival is already famous for its Round Table discussions, which are generally dedicated to a very serious and high-level investigation of formal problems. This year the theme was "Language and Ideology", and papers were given by Pasolini ("Discourse on the Sequence Shot or the Cinema as Semiology of Reality"), by Umberto Eco ("Semiology and the Limits of Linguistic Models"), by Christian Metz ("The Saying and the Said—Specificity of Language and Communication of Ideology"). The point I am making is that there was a gulf between the high-flown considerations of these gentlemen and the inferior nature of many of the films actually shown. So one would go from a

stimulating lecture by Pasolini to an incredibly incompetent Mexican Western, and if that's not schizophrenia-making, I don't know what is.

Fortunately, there were a few good films too. One of them I wrote about from Cannes—the Pinteresque Swedish comedy called *Hugs and Kisses*. Then there was the Dutch 'provo' film *The Less Happy Return of Jozef Katus to the Land of Rembrandt*. This was one of those walking-around films made at a cost of £850; I didn't think much of it when it was shown in the Critics' Week at Cannes, but a second viewing revealed considerable talent, especially in the selection and direction of the actors. It's not the kind of thing I really like, but it stays with you.

Best of all, I thought, was a Yugoslav film by one Dragoslav Lazic. *Tople Godine*, or *The Feverish Years*, first of all boasts an extraordinary performance by the only Eastern actor worthy of the mantle of Cybulski—Bekim Fehmiu. He caused a sensation earlier this year at Cannes in the *Gypsies* film; here, more sensitively directed, he is even better. Naturally one is well disposed to any film which includes sequences from Hitchcock's *The Birds* (hero and heroine are on the night shift, and after work he has nowhere to take her except to the cinema where his brother is a projectionist). But this is not a rosy film: the whole point, as I took it, was the difficulty of living, even in a socialist state ("No jobs at the employment exchange," startlingly reports Mirko to his girl friend). I suppose one of the subjects of the film is the gap between socialist theory and practice, as well as between the generations; their parents are of no help to the couple.

Dragoslav Lazic seems to be a name to remember: his combination of lyrical camerawork, sharp characterisation, and a really intelligent handling of actors and script is rare. "Before I made this film, my first," he declared at a press conference, "my favourite directors were Godard and Antonioni. Now I'm much more involved with Hawks and Ford." A curious remark, but, on reflection, in it lies perhaps an

indication of why his film is so good. Like all innovators, Godard and Antonioni are stimulating influences but bad masters. Even more interestingly, the greatest defender of this film at Pesaro was Bernardo Bertolucci.

Come to think of it, maybe Pesaro wasn't so bad after all.

RICHARD ROUD

Cambridge Animation

FOR THE FIRST TIME, a festival of international animation in England. Organised by the City of Cambridge, in association with the British Film Institute, the Cambridge Animation Festival takes place on 16-19 November 1967 (immediately before the London Film Festival). Most of the films will be new—outstanding animated films of 1966 and 1967, brought in for their British premieres. But in addition there will be programmes tracing eleven exceptional years of cartoons from Yugoslavia's Zagreb Studios, and a retrospective devoted to the life-work of Alexandre Alexeieff. The rapidly growing use of animation in education will also be covered.

The Festival's aim is to increase recognition of the animated film as a medium of communication and creative entertainment. In fact, Cambridge would like to perform for international animation in this country what the London Film Festival has done for international features.

More details are obtainable from the Festival Office, The Corn Exchange, Cambridge.

Work in Progress

Great Britain

JOHN KRISH: *Decline and Fall*, based on Evelyn Waugh's novel. Leading members of the cast to be drawn from National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Companies. Ivan Foxwell produces for 20th Century-Fox.

JOSEPH LOSEY: *Sunburst*, previously known as *Boom*, scripted by Tennessee Williams from his own short story "Man, Bring This Up Road." Shooting in Sardinia (director of photography Douglas Slocombe, art director Richard MacDonald), and starring Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Noël Coward. For Universal Pictures.

ANTHONY PAGE: Makes film debut with *Inadmissible Evidence*, scripted by John Osborne from his own play. Nicol Williamson in his stage role, with Jill Bennett, Eleanor Fazan, Peter Sallis. Woodfall for Paramount.

Belgium

ANDRE DELVAUX: Preparing to shoot his second film, *Un Soir, un Train*, from a story by Johan (Man Who . . . etc.) Daisne, starring Anouk Aimée and probably Yves Montand. Locations in Flanders.

Italy

ORSON WELLES: Planning another *Julius Caesar*, shooting in Rome, with Christopher Plummer as Antony, Paul Scofield as Brutus and himself as Caesar in the style of a South American dictator.

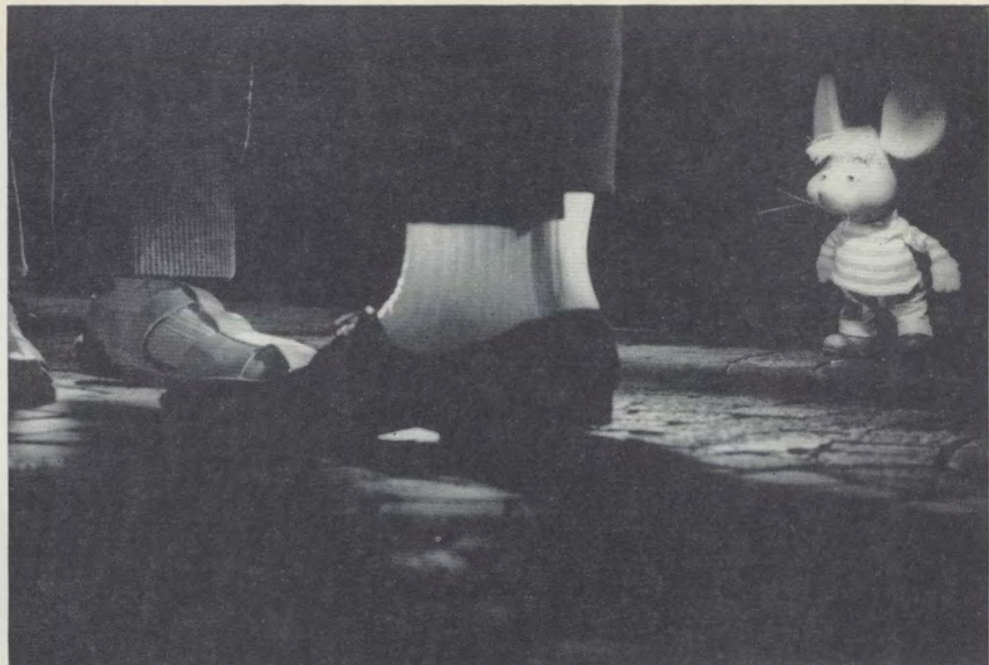
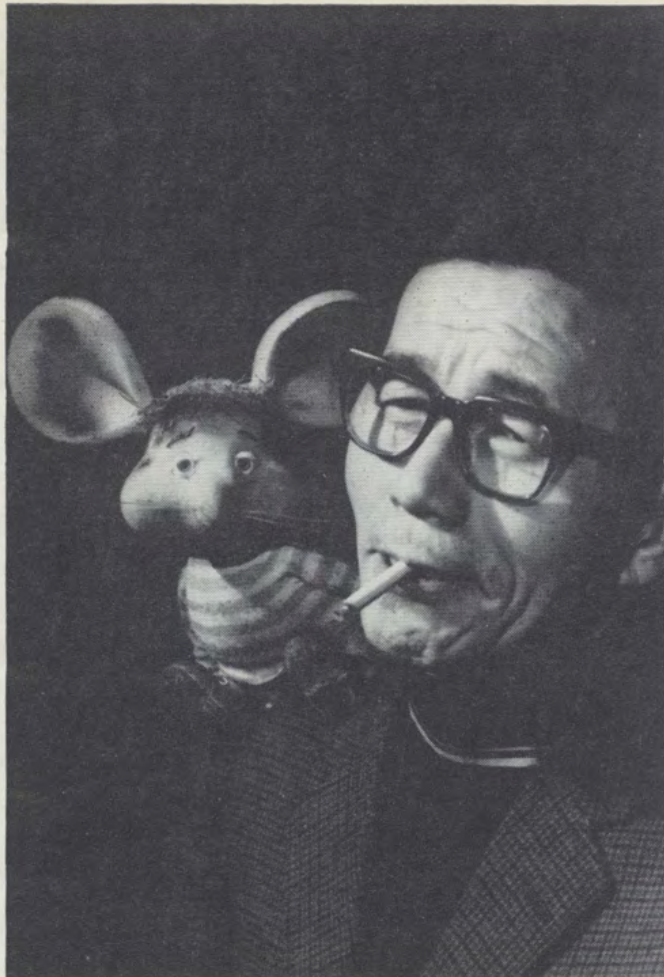
U.S.A.

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA: *Finian's Rainbow*, American-Irish musical (leprechauns, etc.) in Technicolor and Panavision, starring Fred Astaire, Petula Clark, Tommy Steele. Warner Bros.

ROMAN POLANSKI: A suitable subject for his Hollywood debut in *Rosemary's Baby*, based on Ira Levin's novel about an American couple involved in witchcraft. With Mia Farrow. For Paramount.

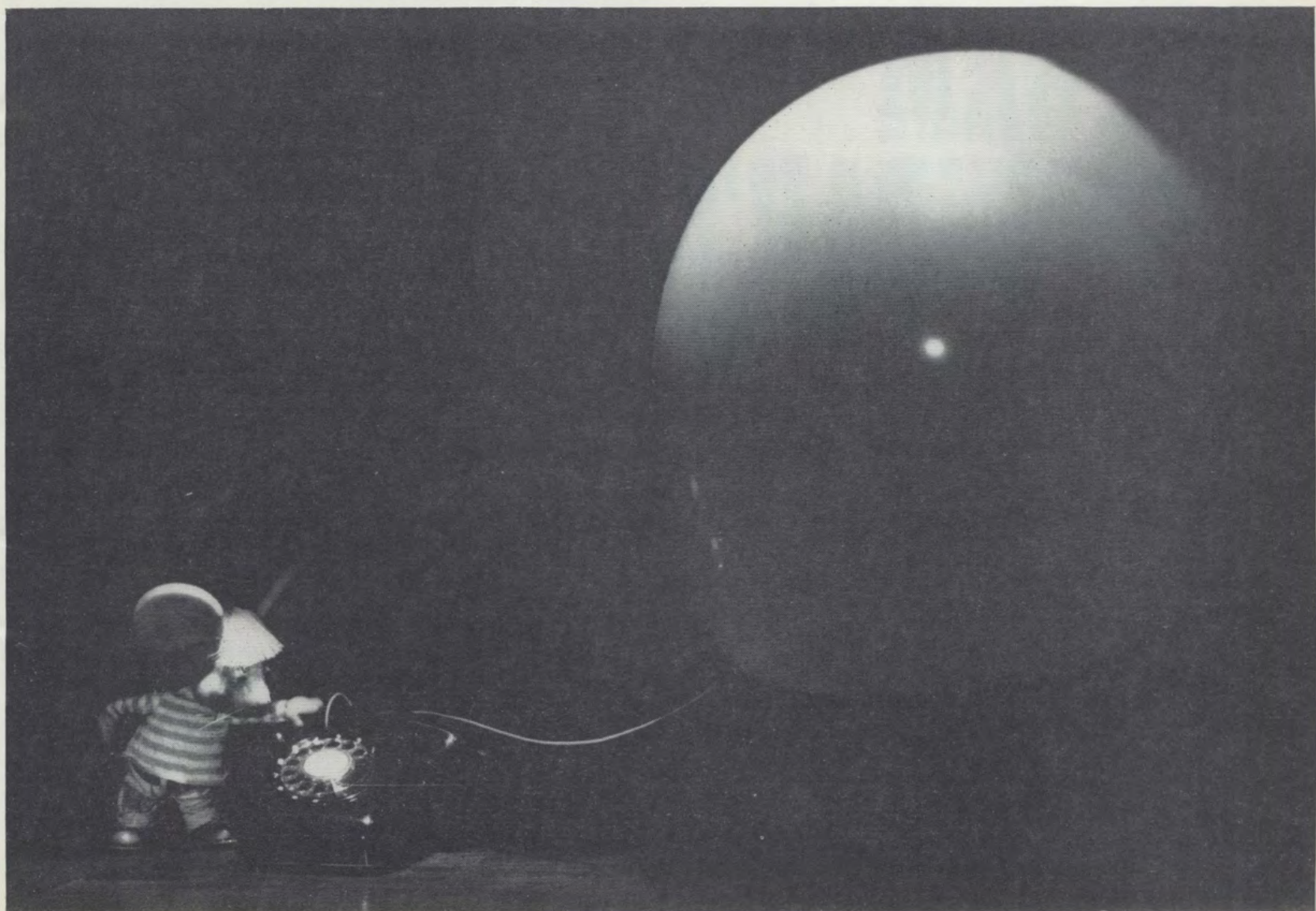
CILLA BLACK AND DAVID WARNER IN PETER HALL'S "WORK IS A FOUR LETTER WORD".





The button war of TOPO GIGIO

Bizarre encounter in Japan for a marriage between Odd Obsessions and Disneyland: reverting to his origins in animation, Kon Ichikawa is directing a puppet film with Topo Gigio, famed mouse of Italian TV and sometime guest star at the London Palladium and on the Ed Sullivan Show. Plot unknown, but the film will be known in Italy as 'Topo Gigio e i sei Ladri', and the Eastman Colour camerawork is by Shigeichi Nagano.





"MAJOR DUNDEE".

Colin McArthur **SAM PECKINPAH'S WEST**

IN SAM PECKINPAH'S *The Deadly Companions*, a gun-toting preacher conducts a service in a saloon, in *Guns in the Afternoon* an alcoholic judge delivers a moving homily on marriage while uniting a couple in a brothel, in *The Glory Guys* (which Peckinpah wrote but did not direct) a Union cavalry officer in full rig leaps aboard a streetcar in St. Louis, and in *Major Dundee* a motley command of Union and Confederate troops rides into action against immaculate French lancers. Visual paradoxes such as these are the most strikingly obvious feature of Peckinpah's work. In part, they seem a reflection of his complex moral sensibility, which finds its necessary expression in films whose heroes, believing themselves to be making ethical judgments, are ultimately concerned with the purity of their own images; a paradoxical world in which potentially good institutions like religion incorporate their own obverse of evil and destruction. Peckinpah extends the geographical and moral environs of the west, bringing to the traditional genre all the devotion

of Ford but speaking with a voice much more contemporary and morally ambivalent than that of the old master.

Peckinpah was a writer/director on television western series (*The Rifleman* and *The Westerner* among them) before coming to the cinema to direct *The Deadly Companions*. From the start he encountered the problem which, in varying degrees, has dogged his brief cinema career—disagreement with his producer. Part of the financial backing for *The Deadly Companions* came from an exhibition chain which wanted a film made without change from the approved script; and Peckinpah found this script hard to swallow. The film is about a morose ex-Union soldier, Yellowleg (Brian Keith), seeking revenge on the Confederate who, it emerges at the film's end, scalped him at Chickamauga. He teams up with two ne'er-do-wells, Turk (Chill Wills) and Billy (Steve Cochran), ostensibly to rob a bank, but it is robbed by another gang and in trying to stop them Yellowleg accidentally kills the son of Kit (Maureen O'Hara), a bar-room hostess. She decides to take the body across Apache country for burial at Serengo; and Yellowleg, to expiate his guilt, goes to protect her. Turk and Billy accompany them, the latter to follow up the advances he has made to Kit, but Yellowleg drives them off. After a dangerous journey and involvement with the Apache they reach Serengo, where there is a final shoot-up with Billy and Turk and the disclosure that Turk is the man Yellowleg seeks. Kit dissuades him from scalping Turk and she and Yellowleg ride off into the sunset.

* * *

The Deadly Companions is interesting less for its intrinsic worth than for its presentation, embryonically, of some of the themes, techniques and even characteristic locations of *Guns in the Afternoon* and *Major Dundee*. Peckinpah displays considerable dramatic flair in the way he opens his films, and the first sequence of *The Deadly Companions* is both arresting and bizarre. The camera picks up a pair of legs in Union cavalry breeches coming into a saloon (Peckinpah frequently injects suspense into his material by the Hitchcockian device of shooting only his players' legs), pans with them past a group of men looking amusedly across the room from where choking noises issue, moves to a barrel and a pair of feet desperately trying to keep it from rolling, and tilts upwards to



reveal Turk, a hand of cards pinned to his shirt, hanging by his neck from a beam.

Themes characteristic of Peckinpah soon emerge. Kit works in a brothel, but she attends a religious service in the saloon. Religion is important in Peckinpah's work, not in the robust, often comic Fordian sense, but in a darker, Bergmanesque manner, and, while it is vestigial in *The Deadly Companions*, it is handled with Peckinpah's usual sense of paradox. While the congregation sing "Rock of Ages" (like Ford, he uses the old hymn tunes extensively) the bartender drapes the pre-Raphaelite nudes decorating the bar. The motif of the personal vendetta between white man and Apache—so important in *Major Dundee*—appears here, and there are other similarities in the presentation of the Apache. *Major Dundee* opens with the Apache leaving the burning Rostes ranch, one of them wearing a looted hat. In *The Deadly Companions* there is a bizarre sequence which, on first sight, appears to involve an Apache war party chasing a stagecoach: but they are drunk and are merely parodying the chase in which they captured the coach. They finally overturn it and plunge, with top hats, parasols and bloomers, into a pool of water.

Peckinpah has described *The Deadly Companions* as "an unmanageable story" and, indeed, his impressive direction is sidetracked throughout by the banality of the lines the players utter. However, he claims that the experience was valuable in that it taught him never to make a movie without total control from writing through to cutting. This he achieved in his second film, *Guns in the Afternoon*, being brought in early by the production head at M-G-M to develop the N. B. Stone script. The result was a masterpiece, on one level a beautiful elegy on the western hero and on another level, yet complementary with the first, a kind of *Pilgrim's Progress*. It can be read as the culmination of a series of westerns, beginning with Henry King's *The Gunfighter* in 1951, dealing with the westerner when law and order and 'civilisation' are settling over the frontier. In such a situation the westerner becomes a modern Philoctetes, whose unerring bow and evil-smelling wound are one and the same. He must be banished to ever more distant frontiers or die, spiritually and sometimes physically.

King introduces his theme by the determinedly anti-romantic quality of Jimmy Ringo's image, drab, baggy

clothes, hanging moustache and ugly boots reaching to his knees, and by the documentary look of the film. Peckinpah's method is to present his hero, Steven Judd (Joel McCrea), in a series of startling visual contrasts with elements of the modern world, which add up to the finest portrayal in the history of the cinema of a man dislocated from his environment. As Judd rides into town he shares the frame with a row of bicycles, an early motor-car, a policeman, a fairground, an ice-cream cart and, later, a Chinese restaurant. At the same time it is demonstrated that the values and images of Judd's world—he is an ex-federal marshal—are cheapened. The horse, second only to the westerner himself as an image of nobility in the genre, is humiliated by losing a race to a camel; and Judd discovers his ex-partner selling out his past dignity by appearing as a fairground sharpshooter, and doing that dishonestly by using buckshot. Gil Westrum (Randolph Scott) styles himself the Oregon Kid in his booth, but in appearance he is Buffalo Bill. The meeting between the two old-timers has an added poignancy if we recall that twenty years ago Joel McCrea played Buffalo Bill in the film of that name.

* * *

Judd has come to town seeking to regain some of his lost dignity by acting as guard of the gold shipment from the mining community at Coarse Gold to the local bank. Westrum and his young sidekick Heck Longtree (Ron Starr) go along as his partners but intend to keep the gold for themselves if they cannot persuade Judd to join them in stealing it. To read the film through as an elegy on the westerner, the elegiac quality begins to emerge on the ride to Coarse Gold. To the accompaniment of George Bassman's sad, evocative score, they move through the strikingly beautiful autumn landscape of Inyo National Park. These old-timers in the autumn of their career (this is as true of McCrea and Scott as of the characters they play) bathe their tired feet in mountain streams, complain of saddle sores, reminisce about their past and the girl Judd nearly married, and finally clamber into their blankets in long underwear. Westrum plays Mephistopheles and attempts to deflect Judd from his resolve to deliver the gold safely, but Judd is morally inflexible and sums up his code in one of the finest lines of a distinguished script, "All I want is to enter my house justified." So inflexible is he that he is prepared to turn

in Westrum and Heck when they attempt to steal the gold. Westrum escapes but rides in to his partner's side for the final shoot-up.

Peckinpah's handling of this final sequence reveals, as much as anything in the film, his devotion to the western genre and his awareness that he is working within a tradition. Westrum and Judd, outlined epically against the sky by the low camera angle, advance side by side on the three Hammonds in a mid two-shot. The Hammonds, on the other hand, are first shown as two tiny, static figures strung out across the frame, then each is seen alone in the frame with the camera tracking towards him. The techniques combine to stress the solidarity and righteous power of Westrum and Judd. Peckinpah then cuts to a long shot showing the bare, open courtyard of the farm with the Hammonds standing on one side of the frame and Westrum and Judd entering the other side. Nothing but space separates the combatants: it is the classic western showdown in all its purity. The battle is swift and fierce; the Hammonds are killed and Judd mortally wounded. In the final shot of the film he looks around the paradisiacal farm where the gunplay took place and lies down contentedly to die, disappearing from the frame and leaving, as the final image, the milieu in which he moved. He has entered his house justified.

The biblical overtones of Judd's phrase resound throughout the film until it can also be read as a religious fable. On the journey to Coarse Gold the three men spend the night at the farm of Joshua Knudsen (R. G. Armstrong). Knudsen himself converses largely in biblical aphorisms, and much of the conversation—even, though ironically, from Westrum—contains biblical imagery. When they offer to pay for a night's lodging Knudsen replies, "God's bounty cannot be bought." Westrum sees Heck looking at Knudsen's pretty daughter Elsa (Mariette Hartley), and replies: "The Lord's bounty may not be for sale, but the Devil's is, if you're willing to pay the price." Peckinpah's ambivalent response to religion is apparent throughout the sequence at the Knudsen farm. There are hints in the dialogue that he wants us to see the farm in wider, symbolic terms. Two remarks of Elsa's are especially revealing: "According to my father every place outside this farm is a place of sin" and "Sometimes I get to thinking that my father and I are the only two people left in the world."

The farm is peaceful, rich and beautiful—a Garden of Eden, in fact. But it is a post-lapsarian garden, for Knudsen's religion, in keeping with his Scandinavian name, is one of violence and terror. There is more than a hint of incest in his fierce desire to keep his daughter pure, and he prays daily at his wife's grave on which stands a cross with the legend, "Wherefore, O Harlot, hear the word of the Lord. I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged. I will give thee blood in fury and in jealousy." The text is

"GUNS IN THE AFTERNOON": MARIETTE HARTLEY AND JENIE JACKSON (KATE).



meaningful in terms of Elsa's relationship with Billy Hammond.

Because her father strikes her, Elsa runs away and accompanies Judd and his companions to Coarse Gold to marry Billy Hammond. The paradisiacal nature of the Knudsen farm is more obvious when Coarse Gold is seen. It is situated at the bottom of a crater and the landscape is arid and snow-covered. The miners behave like animals and there is a Dantean ring about the sign outside Kate's place, the local brothel—"Men taken in and done for." The five Hammond brothers (James Drury, John Anderson, Warren Oates, L. Q. Jones and John Davis Chandler) are evil incarnate and Henry Hammond, introduced by Billy as "our banker", bears a raven on his shoulder.

Elsa's marriage to Billy is the most startlingly bizarre sequence in the film. The five brothers and Elsa, wearing her mother's wedding dress, arrive on horseback singing "When the roll is called up yonder we'll be there"—a melancholy truth for the Hammonds before the film ends. The scene inside the brothel is best described by reference to painters such as Breughel, Goya and, especially, Toulouse-Lautrec: lurid reds, browns and purples predominate as the sad, leprous whores line up as flower girls, and Kate herself, in appearance and as photographed by Peckinpah, is a figure straight out of Fellini. Her obscene laughter brings the wedding celebrations to a climax in which it becomes clear that Elsa is regarded as communal property by the Hammonds. She is dragged off by Billy to a cubicle where, in response to her unwillingness, he strikes her. Elsa married Billy because her father had struck her. Billy strikes her with a precisely similar blow in a room lit exactly the same way as that in which the earlier scene with her father occurred. By thus merging the identities of her father and husband, Peckinpah retrospectively underlines the earlier hints of incest and reinforces the parallel between Elsa and her mother. Nearly raped by Sylvus and Henry Hammond, Elsa is rescued by Judd and Heck, who take her back to her father's farm. With her growing commitment to Heck and the killing of her husband and his brothers, the text on her mother's grave works itself out, though in a typically paradoxical way.

* * *

That paradox is central to Peckinpah's vision, the reflection of his many-faceted moral sensibility, is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the character of Steven Judd. He is a good man and a figure of great dignity, and it is his ethic rather than Westrum's that young Heck finally accepts and the film ultimately endorses; but there is about Judd a kind of spiritual pride, an obsession with his own image that blinds him to other, often human, considerations. His treatment of Westrum over the stealing of the gold is judicial rather than humane and he is coolly willing to leave Elsa in Coarse Gold should the miners' court so decide. It is left to the morally fluid Westrum to steal Judge Tolliver's licence, terrorise him into denying he ever possessed one, and so secure Elsa's release. On a purely functional level Judd is on two occasions less than efficient. He fails to check the rifles (from which the Hammonds have removed the bullets) before leaving Coarse Gold, and he leads the party into an ambush at the Knudsen farm. In view of these defects, Judd's funereal presence is harder to admire, and the text that hangs on Knudsen's living-room wall, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame. For with the lowly is wisdom," may ultimately apply to Steven Judd.

Even *Guns in the Afternoon*, its complex themes beautifully interwoven and worked out, did not escape production interference. As far as is known no cuts were made, but there was a change in the M-G-M executive and the new man had the film released as a second feature. The most deadly interference, however, was with Peckinpah's third film, *Major Dundee*. In a *Film Quarterly* interview he described his (then) new project as "the story of a strong-minded major who takes it upon himself to run down an Apache predator. Actually the chase is subordinate to what happens within the man." With thirty-four minutes cut from the version shown in Britain, we are left with the chase and some interesting glimpses of what happens within the man.

Future critics will very likely refer to it primarily to throw light on *Guns in the Afternoon*, but despite the cuts its central theme is more coherent than a majority of critics have recognised. The subject matter invites inevitable comparisons with the cavalry films of John Ford. It is probably trite to observe that the way Peckinpah moves his soldiers across river fords, along skylines and in V-formation across the Mexican brush owes something to Ford, for what cavalry film would not. Like Ford, Peckinpah seemed to be in the process of gathering a stock company round him: John Davis Chandler, Warren Oates and L. Q. Jones appear as Confederate prisoners, and R. G. Armstrong is once more a darkly religious figure ("Who that destroyeth my flock, I will so destroy"). But the similarities to Ford's work are outweighed by the differences.

Battle scenes in Ford's films invariably look like romanticised nineteenth-century canvases: the battle scenes in *Major Dundee* are more ambivalent. The Technicolor print and certain parts of the action—for example the retrieving of the colours by Ben Tyreen (Richard Harris)—tend to romanticise the battles; but there is an element in Peckinpah's vision which pulls him strongly towards realism, and the confusion and butchery of the engagement against the French looks more characteristic of a contemporary war movie. The pull towards realism obliges him to present the aftermath of the first battle with the Apache, and he pans across Dundee's depleted command, the dead trussed in sacks from which blood seeps, the living bathing their wounds or brushing flies off them.

Peckinpah's use of song is the very reverse of Ford's. When Ford's cavalry ride off to war the songs they sing underline their solidarity, but when Dundee (Charlton Heston) leads his mixed command out of Fort Benlin, the Confederates singing 'Dixie', the Union troopers 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' and the civilians 'Clementine', the different songs reflect the latent tensions and disunity of the men. However, like Ford, Peckinpah demonstrates that he can handle a large cast more than competently and at the same time flex his directorial muscles in all directions, most notably in the editing. He frequently overlaps the end of a scene with the soundtrack from the succeeding one, and the editing of the battle scenes—its swiftness reflecting the confusion of the action—is held together by such devices as having Dundee begin a sword stroke which is completed by Tyreen in the next frame.

* * *

The similarities between *Major Dundee* and *Guns in the Afternoon* are few. Religion is less important in the later film, though still handled with Peckinpah's characteristic ambivalence. When Jimmy Lee Benteen taunts the Negro, Aesop, and orders him to remove his boots, the Reverend Dahlstrom insists on doing it instead. However, he accompanies this apparently humble, Christian act with several blows and cuffs and, indeed, forcibly removes Benteen's boots. The most obvious similarity between the two films is in the *raisons d'être* of their heroes: both Amos Dundee and Steven Judd are men set apart from their fellows by devotion to the purity of their own image—Judd as dedicated lawman, Dundee as dedicated soldier.

Dundee's sole function, as he sees it, is to wage war, which he does supremely well. Several critics have suggested that he is a book soldier, but his reported individuality at Gettysburg, his mounting the punitive expedition against the Apache despite strong opposition from his second-in-command ("They could shoot you for this, Amos"), his instructions to Lieutenant Graham to hi-jack the Union supply train, and his flouting of his own picket regulations (the incident at the pool with Teresa), hardly support this view. This interpretation of Dundee probably stems from Tyreen's remark when pleading for O. W. Hadley's life, "Forget the book for once, Amos." The manual says that deserters should be executed, but Dundee's decision to have Hadley shot is surely his independent assessment of the situation. It is the wrong-headedness of this assessment, the inability to perceive that it will split his command down the middle, that reveals Dundee's limitations as a man. Ben Tyreen foresees the consequences and avoids them by taking the onus of Hadley's death on himself. Steven Judd acts out his role with few doubts about its validity. It



"GUNS IN THE AFTERNOON": WEDDING AT COARSE GOLD.

would seem that *Major Dundee* was meant to go further than this, for Ben Tyreen questions both Dundee's image of himself and his own. "I am a professional soldier, not a jailkeeper" says Dundee, and when Tyreen insults him it is by querying Dundee's assessment of himself, "How exactly do you see yourself, Amos? Has it ever occurred to you to wonder why they made you a jailer?" The following exchange between Tyreen and Dundee reveals the former's own search for a suitable persona:

TYREEN: I've been three men in one lifetime: Irish immigrant . . .

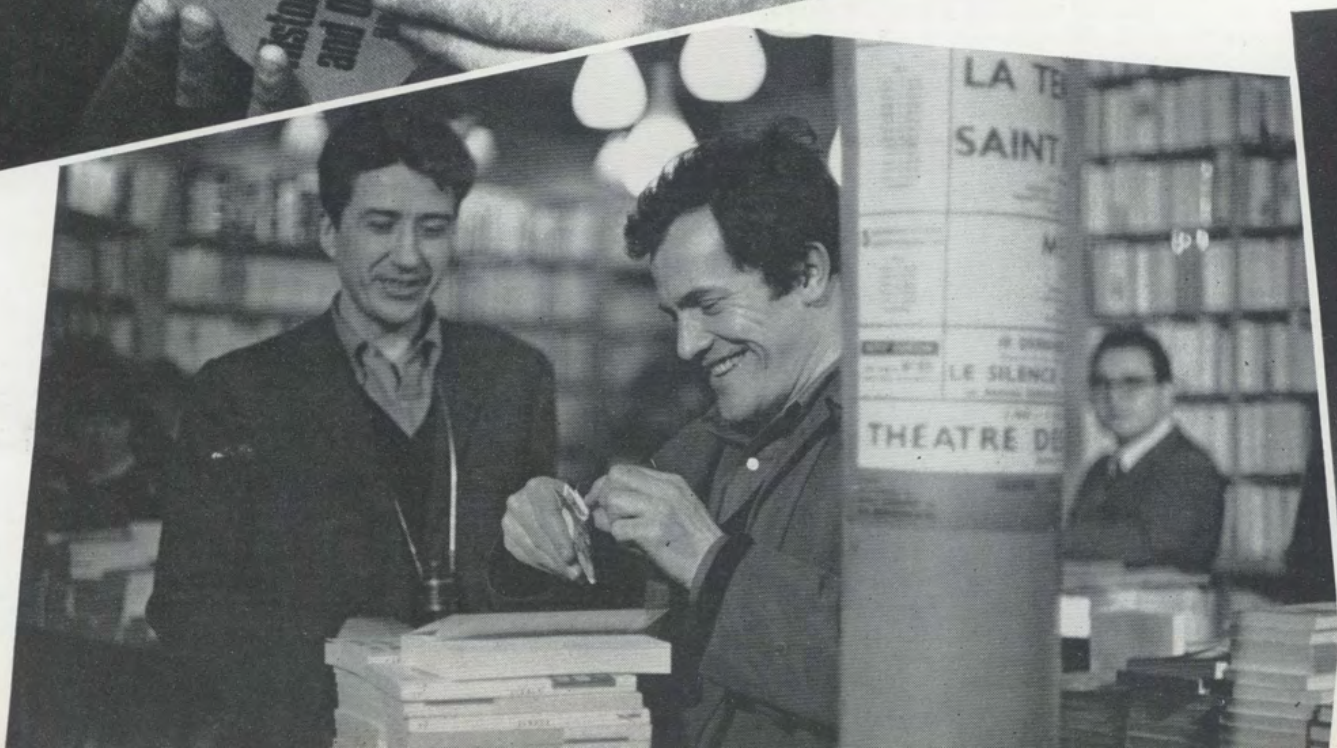
DUNDEE: . . . cashiered United States officer, and Confederate renegade. I don't like any of them.

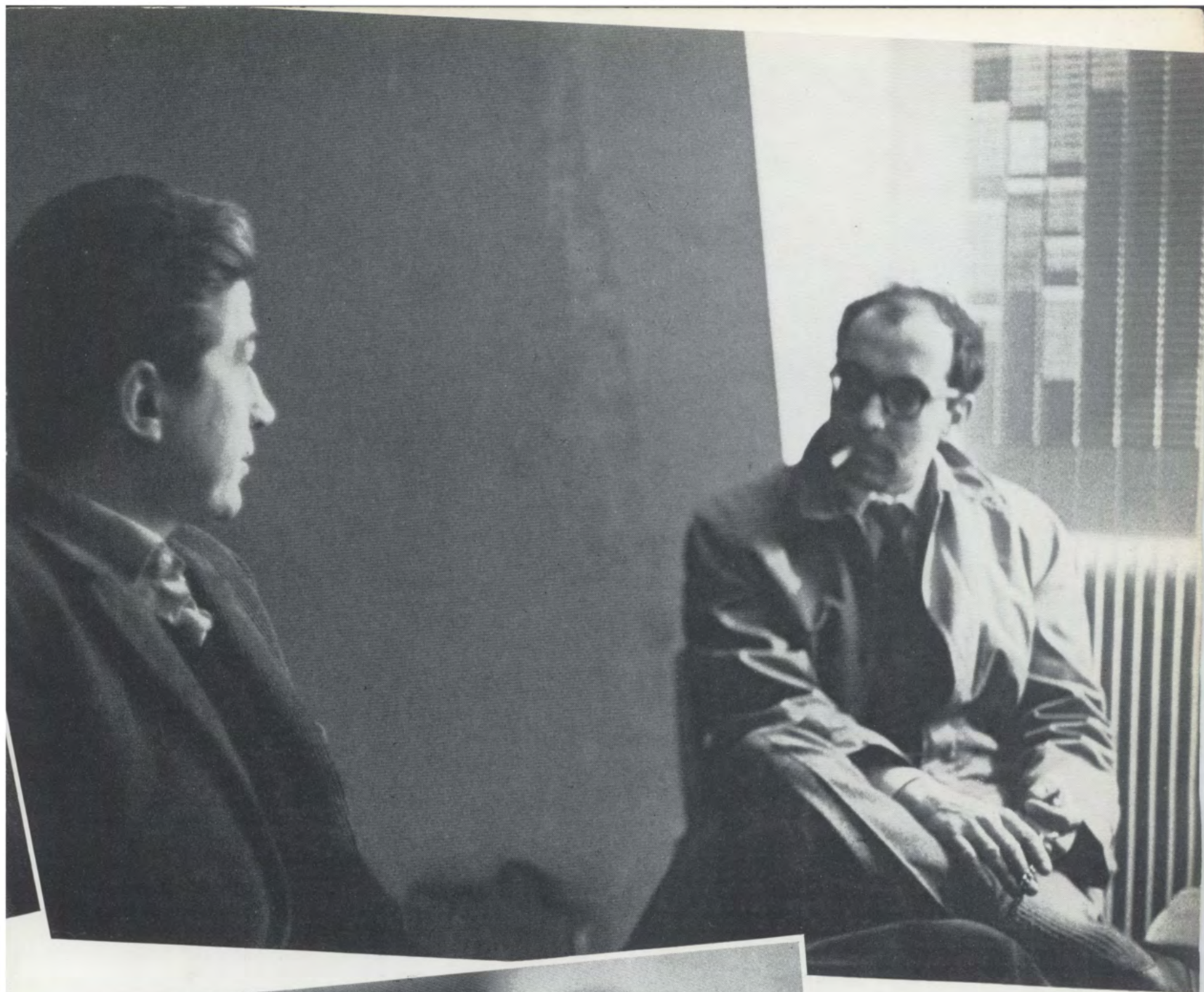
TYREEN: Now isn't that a coincidence.

Tyreen has, of course, found his most congenial persona as an artist who, like his fellow-Irishman Oscar Wilde, puts all his talent into his life. Critics have been harsh on Richard Harris for his portrayal, and there are moments admittedly when he becomes Frank Machin in grotesque fancy dress, but the role surely called for a player of his baroque temperament and gestures. Tyreen acts out his role even to the death, riding on to the Frenchmen's lances while Sergeant Chillum and Jimmy Lee Benteen watch with shining eyes. But unlike Dundee who, separated from his command and the functions which give him life, falls to pieces, Tyreen's devotion to his own cavalier image, because it is cynical and half-believed, does not cause his human awareness to atrophy.

Despite its psychological probing and moral awareness, *Major Dundee* lacks the satisfying completeness of *Guns in the Afternoon*, and not only because of the cuts. Too many themes are introduced and left unexplored—the implications of Dundee's southern birth which Tyreen mentions and Sam Potts hints at, the change in Lieutenant Graham from a source of comic relief to a mature officer and, most of all, the pattern of Dundee's moral collapse in Durango.

Peckinpah's artistic intransigence has cost him dear—he was removed from direction of *The Cincinnati Kid*—and his recent work has been in television. His film career has been brief but impressive: a competent exercise in genre, a masterpiece, and a dismembered epic. The cinema cannot afford to lose Sam Peckinpah.





far from vietnam

Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais (with Bernard Fresson, left) and Agnès Varda, three of the directors involved in the group project "Loin du Viêt Nam" about which Gilles Jacob writes on page 166.



Susan Sontag

ONE IMPULSE IS TO TAKE Bergman's masterpiece for granted. Since 1960 at least, with the breakthrough into new narrative forms propagated with most notoriety (if not greatest distinction) by *Last Year in Marienbad*, audiences have continued to be educated by even more elliptical and complex work. As Resnais' imagination was subsequently to surpass itself in *Muriel*, a succession of ever more difficult and rewarding films has turned up in recent years. But that good fortune releases nobody who cares about films from acclaiming work as original and triumphant as *Persona*. It is depressing that the film has thus far received only a fraction of the attention it deserves—at least in New York and Paris. (At the moment of writing, it hasn't yet opened in London.)

Of course, some of the paltriness of the critics' reaction may be more a response to the signature *Persona* carries than to the film itself. That signature has come to mean a prodigal, tirelessly productive career; a rather facile, often merely beautiful, by now (it seemed) almost over-size body of work; a lavishly inventive, sensual, yet somewhat melodramatic talent, employed with what appeared to be a certain complacency, and prone to embarrassing displays of intellectual bad taste. From the Fellini of the North, exacting filmgoers could hardly be blamed for not expecting, ever, a truly great film. But *Persona* happily forces one to put aside such dismissive preconceptions about its author.

The rest of the neglect of *Persona* may be set down to emotional squeamishness; the film, like much of Bergman's recent work, bears an almost defiling charge of personal agony. I'm thinking particularly of *The Silence*—most accomplished, by far, of the films made before this one. And *Persona* draws heavily on the themes and schematic cast established in *The Silence*. (The principal characters in both films are two women bound together in a passionate agonised relationship, one of them the mother of a drastically neglected small boy. Both films take up the themes of the scandal of the erotic; the polarities of violence and powerlessness, reason and unreason, language and silence, the intelligible and the un-

intelligible.) But the new film ventures at least as much beyond *The Silence* as the distance separating that film, by its emotional power and subtlety, from Bergman's entire previous work.

That distance gives, for the present moment, the measure of a work which is undeniably 'difficult'. *Persona* is bound to trouble, perplex and frustrate most filmgoers—at least as much as *Marienbad* did in its day. Or so one would suppose. But, heaping imperturbability upon relative neglect, critical reaction has shied away from associating anything very baffling with the film. The critics have allowed, mildly, that the latest Bergman is unnecessarily obscure. Some add that this time he's overdone the mood of unrelenting bleakness. It's intimated that with this film he has ventured out of his depth, exchanging art for artiness. But the difficulties and rewards of *Persona* are much more formidable than such banal objections would suggest.

Of course, evidence of these difficulties is available anyway. Why else all the discrepancies—plain misrepresentations—in critics' accounts of what actually happens during the film? Like *Marienbad*, *Persona* seems to be full of obscurity. Its general look has nothing of the built-in, abstract evocativeness of the château in Resnais' film: the space and furnishings of *Persona* are anti-romantic, cool, clinical, and bourgeois-modern. But there's no less of a mystery lodged in this setting. Images and dialogue are given which the viewer cannot help but find puzzling, not being able to decipher whether certain scenes take place in the past, present or future; and whether certain images and episodes belong to 'reality' or 'fantasy'.

One common approach to a film presenting difficulties of this now fairly familiar sort is to declare such distinctions to be irrelevant, and the film to be actually all of one piece. What's happened is that its action has been situated in a merely (or wholly) 'mental' universe. But this approach merely postpones the difficulty, it seems to me. *Within* the structure of what is shown, the elements continue being

related to each other in the ways that might have led the viewer to settle for supposing some events to be 'real' and others visionary (whether dream, fantasy, hallucination or extra-worldly visitation). For example: causal connections observed in one portion of the film are flouted in another part; several equally persuasive but mutually exclusive explanations are given of the same event. These discordant internal relations are only transposed, intact, when the whole film is relocated in the mind.

Actually, it's no more helpful to describe *Persona* as a wholly subjective film, one taking place entirely within someone's head, than it was (how easy to see that now) in elucidating *Marienbad*, a film whose disregard for conventional chronology and a clearly delineated border between fantasy and reality could scarcely have constituted more of a provocation than *Persona*.

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What first needs to be made clear about *Persona* is what can't be done with it. The most skilful attempt to arrange a single, plausible anecdote out of the film must leave out or contradict some of its key sections, images and procedures. It's the failure to perceive this critical rule that has led to the flat, impoverished and partly inaccurate account of the film promulgated almost unanimously by reviewers.

According to this account, *Persona* tells the story of two women. One is a successful actress, evidently in her mid-thirties, named Elizabeth Vogler (Liv Ullmann), now suffering from an enigmatic mental collapse whose chief symptoms are muteness and a near-catatonic lassitude. The other is the pretty young nurse of twenty-five named Alma (Bibi Andersson) charged with caring for Elizabeth—first at the mental hospital, then at the beach cottage loaned to them by the woman psychiatrist who is Elizabeth's doctor and Alma's supervisor. What happens in the course of the film, according to the critics' consensus, is that, through some mysterious process, each of the two women becomes the other. The officially stronger one, Alma, gradually assumes the problems and confusions of her patient, while the sick woman, felled by despair and/or psychosis, regains her power of speech and returns to her former life. (The viewer doesn't see this exchange consummated: what he sees at the end of *Persona* looks like an agonised stalemate. But it was widely reported that the film, until shortly before it was released, contained a brief closing scene which showed Elizabeth on the stage again, apparently completely recovered. From this, presumably, the viewer was to infer that the nurse is now mute and has taken on the burden of her despair.)

Proceeding from this constructed version, half 'story' and half 'meaning', critics have read off a number of further meanings. Some regard the transaction between Elizabeth and Alma as illustrating some impersonal law which operates intermittently in human affairs; no ultimate responsibility pertains to either of them. Others posit a conscious cannibalism of the innocent Alma by the actress—and thus read the film as a parable of the predatory energies of the artist, forever scavenging life for 'material'. Other critics move quickly to an even more general plane, and extract from *Persona* a diagnosis of the contemporary dissociation of personality, a demonstration of the inevitable failure of good will and trust, and predictably correct views on such matters as the alienated affluent society, the nature of madness, psychiatry and its limitations, the American war in Vietnam, the Western legacy of sexual guilt, and the Six Million. (Then they often go on, as Michel Cournot did in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, to chide Bergman for this vulgar didacticism which they have imputed to him.)

My own view is that, even when turned into a 'story', this prevailing account of *Persona* grossly oversimplifies and misrepresents. True, Alma does seem to grow progressively more vulnerable; in the course of the film she is reduced to fits of hysteria, cruelty, childish dependence and (probably) delusion. It's also true that Elizabeth gradually becomes stronger, that is, more active, more responsive; though her change is far subtler and, until virtually the end, she still refuses to speak. But all this is hardly tantamount to an 'exchange' of attributes

and identities. Nor is it established that Alma, however much she does come, with pain and longing, to identify herself with the actress, takes on Elizabeth's dilemmas, whatever these may be. (They're far from made clear.)

With *Persona*, it's the temptation to invent more 'story' that has to be resisted. Take, for instance, the scene which starts with the abrupt presence of a middle-aged man wearing dark glasses (Gunnar Bjornstrand) near the beach cottage. All we see is that he approaches Alma, addressing her and continuing to call her, despite her protests, by the name of Elizabeth; that he tries to embrace her; that throughout this scene Elizabeth's impassive face is never more than a few inches away; that Alma suddenly yields to his embraces, saying "Yes, I am Elizabeth" (Elizabeth is still watching intently), and goes to bed with him amid a torrent of endearments. Then we see the two women together (shortly after?); they are alone, behaving as if nothing has happened. This sequence can be taken as illustrating Alma's growing identification with Elizabeth, and gauging the extent of the process by which she is learning (really? in her imagination?) to become Elizabeth. While Elizabeth has voluntarily (?) renounced being an actress, by becoming mute, Alma is involuntarily and painfully engaged in becoming that Elizabeth Vogler, the performer, who no longer exists. Still, nothing we see justifies describing this scene as most critics have done as a 'real' event—something that happens in the course of the plot on the same level as the initial removal of the two women to the cottage. But neither can we be absolutely sure that this, or something like it, isn't taking place. After all, we do see it happening. (And it's in the nature of cinema to confer on all events, without indications to the contrary, an equivalent degree of reality: everything shown on the screen is 'there', present.)

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The difficulty is that Bergman withholds the kind of clear signals for sorting out what's fantasy from what is 'real' offered, for example, by Buñuel in *Belle de Jour*. Buñuel has put the clues there; he wants the viewer to be able to decipher his film. The insufficiency of the clues Bergman has planted must be taken to indicate that he intends the film to remain partly encoded. The viewer can only move towards, but never achieve, certainty about the action. However, so far as the distinction between fantasy and reality has any use in understanding *Persona*, I should argue that much more than critics have allowed of what happens in and around the beach cottage is most plausibly understood as Alma's fantasy. One prime piece of evidence is a sequence occurring soon after the two women arrive at the seaside. It's the sequence in which, after we have seen (i.e., the camera has shown) Elizabeth enter Alma's room and stand beside her and stroke her hair, we see Alma, pale, troubled, asking Elizabeth the next morning "Did you come to my room last night?" And Elizabeth, slightly quizzical, anxious, shaking her head No.

Now, there seems no reason to doubt Elizabeth's answer. The viewer isn't given any evidence of a malevolent plan on her part to undermine Alma's confidence in her own sanity, nor for doubting Elizabeth's memory or sanity in the ordinary sense. But if that is so, two important points may be taken as established early in the film. One is that Alma is hallucinating—and, presumably, will continue doing so. The other is that hallucinations or visions will appear on the screen with the same rhythms, the same look of objective reality, as something 'real'. (However, some clues, too complex to describe here, are given in the lighting of certain scenes.) And once these points are granted, it seems highly plausible to take at least the scene with Elizabeth's husband as Alma's fantasy, as well as several scenes in which there is a charged, trance-like physical contact between the two women.

But even to make any headway sorting out what Alma imagines from what may be taken as really happening is a minor achievement. And it quickly becomes a misleading one, unless subsumed under the larger issue of the form of exposition employed by the film. As I have suggested, *Persona* is constructed according to a form that resists being reduced to a 'story'—say, the story about the relation (however ambiguous and abstract) between two women named Elizabeth and

Alma, a patient and a nurse, a star and an ingenue, *alma* (soul) and *persona* (mask). The reason is that reduction to a 'story' means, in the end, a reduction of Bergman's film to the single dimension of psychology. Not that the psychological dimension isn't there. It is. But a correct understanding of *Persona* must go beyond the psychological point of view.

This seems clear from the fact that Bergman allows the audience to interpret Elizabeth's mute condition in several ways—as involuntary mental breakdown, and as voluntary moral decision leading either towards self-purification or suicide. But whatever the background of her condition, it is much more in the sheer fact of it than in its causes that Bergman wishes to involve the viewer. In *Persona*, muteness is first of all a fact with a certain psychic and moral weight, a fact which initiates its own kind of causality upon an 'other'.

I am inclined to impute a privileged status to the speech the psychiatrist makes to Elizabeth, before she departs with Alma to the cottage. The psychiatrist tells the silent, stony-faced Elizabeth that she has understood her case. She has grasped that Elizabeth wants to be sincere, not to play a role; to make the inner and the outer come together. And that, having rejected suicide as a solution, she has decided to be mute. She advises Elizabeth to bide her time, to live her experience through; and at the end of that time, she predicts, the actress will return to the world . . . But even if one treats this speech as setting forth a privileged view, it would be a mistake to assume that it's the key to *Persona*; or even to assume that the psychiatrist's thesis wholly explains Elizabeth's condition. (The doctor could be wrong, or at least be simplifying the matter.) By placing this speech early in the film, and by never referring explicitly to this 'explanation' again, Bergman has, in effect, both taken account of psychology and dispensed with it. Without indicating that he regards psychological explanation as unimportant, he clearly consigns to a relatively minor place any consideration of the role the actress's *motives* have in the action.

In a sense, *Persona* takes a position beyond psychology. As it does, in an analogous sense, beyond eroticism. The materials of an erotic subject are certainly present, such as the 'visit' of Elizabeth's husband. There is, above all, the connection between the two women themselves which, in its feverish proximity, its caresses, its sheer passionateness (avowed by Alma in word, gesture and fantasy) could hardly fail, it would seem, to suggest a powerful, if largely inhibited, sexual involvement. But in fact, what might be sexual in feeling is largely transposed into something beyond sexuality, beyond eroticism even. The only purely sexual episode is the scene in which Alma, sitting across the room from Elizabeth, tells the story of the beach orgy. Alma speaks, transfixed, reliving the memory and at the same time consciously delivering up this shameful secret to Elizabeth as her greatest gift of love. Entirely through discourse, without any recourse to images (through a flashback), a violent sexual atmosphere is generated. But this sexuality has nothing to do with the 'present' of the film, and the relationship between the two women.

In this respect, *Persona* makes a remarkable modification of the structure of *The Silence*, where the love-hate relationship between the sisters had an unmistakable sexual energy. In *Persona*, Bergman has achieved a more interesting situation by delicately excising or transcending the possible sexual implications of the tie between the two women. It is a remarkable feat of moral and psychological poise. While maintaining the indeterminacy of the situation Bergman can't give the impression of evading the issue, and he mustn't present anything that is psychologically improbable.

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The advantages of keeping the psychological aspects indeterminate (while internally credible) are that Bergman can do many other things besides tell a 'story'. Instead of having a full-blown 'story' on his hands, he has something that is in one sense cruder, and in another more abstract: a body of material, a subject. The function of the 'subject' or 'material' may be as much its opacity, its multiplicity, as the manner in which it yields itself up to being incarnated in a determinate plot. One predictable result of a work constituted

along these principles is that the action would appear intermittent, porous, shot through with intimations of absence, of what could not be univocally said.

This procedure doesn't mean that a narration of this type has forfeited 'sense'. But it does mean that 'sense' isn't necessarily tied to a determinate plot. What is envisaged instead is the possibility of an extended narration composed of events which are not (wholly) explicated, but which are nevertheless possible. The 'forward' movement of such a narrative might be measured by reciprocal relations between its parts—e.g. *displacements*—rather than by ordinary realistic (mainly psychological) causality. Often, there might exist what could be called a dormant plot. Still, critics have better things to do than ferreting out the story line as if the author had—through mere clumsiness or error or frivolity or lack of craft—concealed it. In such narratives, it isn't a question of a plot that has been mislaid but of one that has been (at least in part) annulled. That intention, whether conscious on the artist's part or merely implicit in the work, should be taken at face value and respected.

Take the matter of information. One tactic upheld by traditional narrative is to give 'full' information, so that the ending of the viewing or reading experience coincides, ideally, with full satisfaction of one's desire to 'know', to understand what happened and why. (This is, of course, a highly manipulated quest for knowledge. It's the business of the artist to convince his audience that what they haven't learned at the end they *can't* know, or shouldn't *care* about knowing.) But one of the salient features of new narratives is a deliberate, calculated frustration of the desire to 'know'. Did anything happen last year at Marienbad? What did become of the girl in *L'Avventura*? Where is Alma going when she boards a bus alone in one of the final shots of *Persona*?

Once it is conceived that the desire to 'know' may be (in part) systematically thwarted, the old expectations about plotting can no longer hold. At first, it may seem that a plot in the old sense is still there; only it's being related at an oblique, uncomfortable angle, where vision is obscured. Eventually, though, it needs to be seen that the plot isn't there at all in the old sense; and therefore that the point isn't to tantalise but to involve the audience more directly in other matters, for instance in the very processes of 'knowing' and 'seeing'. (A great precursor of this conception of narration is Flaubert. And the method can be seen in *Madame Bovary*, in the persistent use of the off-centre detail in description.)

The result of the new narration, then, is a tendency to de-dramatise. In, for example, *Journey to Italy* or *L'Avventura*, we are told what is ostensibly a story. But it is a story which proceeds by omissions. The audience is being haunted, as it were, by the sense of a lost or absent meaning to which even the artist himself has no access.

The avowal of agnosticism on the artist's part may look like unseriousness or contempt for the audience. But when the artist declares that he doesn't 'know' any more than the audience knows, what he is saying is that all the meaning resides in the work itself. There is no surplus, nothing 'behind' it. Such works seem to lack sense or meaning only to the extent that entrenched critical attitudes have established as a dictum for the narrative arts that meaning resides solely in this surplus of 'reference' outside the work—to the 'real world' or to the artist's intention. But this is, at best, an arbitrary ruling. The meaning of a narration is not the same as a paraphrase of the values associated by an ideal audience with the 'real-life' equivalents or sources of the plot elements, nor with the attitudes projected by the artist towards them. And there are other kinds of narration besides those based on a 'story'.

For instance, the material can be treated as a *thematic resource*—from which different, perhaps concurrent, narrative structures can be derived as variations. Once this possibility is consciously entertained, it becomes clear that the formal mandates of such a construction must differ from those of a 'story' (or even a set of parallel stories). The difference will probably appear most striking in the treatment of time.

A 'story' involves the audience in what happens, how it comes out. The movement is strongly linear, whatever the meanderings and digressions. One moves from A to B, only



to look forward to C, whereupon C (if the affair is satisfactorily managed) points one's interest in the direction of D. Each link in the chain is, so to speak, self-abolishing—since it has served its turn.

But the development of a theme-and-variation narrative is much less linear. The linear movement can't be altogether suppressed, since the experience of the audience remains a movement in time. But this forward movement can be sharply qualified by a competing retrograde principle, which could take the form, say, of continual backward- and cross-references. Such a work would invite re-experiencing, multiple viewing. It would ask the spectator, ideally, to be able to position himself at several points in the narrative simultaneously. Time may appear in the form of a perpetual present, or as a conundrum in which it's made impossible to establish exactly the distinction between past, present and future (*Marienbad* and Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle* are fairly pure examples of the latter procedure). In *Persona*, Bergman uses a mixed approach. The treatment of sequences in the centre of the film seems realistically chronological, while distinctions of 'before' and 'after' are drastically bleached out, almost indecipherable at the beginning and close of the film.

But despite this more moderate use of the procedure of temporal dislocation, the construction of *Persona* is best described in terms of the form: variations on a theme. The theme is that of *doubling*; and the variations are those that follow from its leading possibilities—duplication, inversion, reciprocal exchange, repetition. Once again, it would be a serious misunderstanding to demand to know exactly what happens in *Persona*; for what is narrated is only deceptively, secondarily, a 'story' at all. It's correct to speak of the film in terms of the fortunes of two characters named Elizabeth and Alma who are engaged in a desperate duel of identities. But it is no less true, or relevant, to treat *Persona* as what might be misleadingly called an allegory: as relating the duel between two mythical parts of a single 'person', the corrupted person who acts (Elizabeth) and the ingenuous soul (Alma) who founders in contact with corruption.

Bergman is not just telling a 'story' about the psychic ordeal of two women: he is using that ordeal as a constituent element of his theme. And that theme, for which I've used the name of *doubling*, is no less a formal idea than a psychological one.

We know this in two ways. First, by the fact already stressed that Bergman has withheld enough information about the 'story' of the two women to make it impossible to determine clearly the main outlines, much less all, of what passes between them. Second, by the fact that he has introduced a number of reflections about the nature of representation (the status of the image, of the word, of action, of the film medium itself). *Persona* is not just a representation of transactions between the two characters, Alma and Elizabeth, but a meditation on the film which is 'about' them.

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The most explicit vehicle for this meditation is the opening and closing sequence, in which Bergman tries to create the film as an object: a finite object, a made object, a fragile perishable object, and therefore existing in space as well as time.

Persona begins with darkness. Then two points of light gradually gain in brightness, until we see that they're the two carbons of the arc lamp; after this, a portion of the leader flashes by. Then follows a suite of rapid images, some barely identifiable—a chase from a slapstick silent film; an erect penis; a nail being hammered into the palm of a hand; a shot from the rear of a stage of a heavily made-up actress declaiming to the footlights and darkness beyond (we see this image soon again and know that it's Elizabeth playing her last role, that of Electra); the immolation of a Buddhist monk in Vietnam; assorted dead bodies in a morgue. All these images go by very rapidly, mostly too fast to see; but gradually they're slowing down, as if consenting to adjust to the time in which the viewer can comfortably perceive them. Then follows a final set of images, run off at normal speed. We see a thin, unhealthy-looking boy around eleven lying under a sheet on a hospital cot against the wall of a bare room; the viewer, at



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first, is bound to associate to the corpses he's just seen. But the boy stirs, awkwardly kicks off the sheet, puts on a pair of large round glasses, takes out a book and begins to read. Then we see that ahead of him is an indecipherable blur, very faint, but on its way to becoming an image. It's the face of a beautiful woman. As if in a trance, the boy slowly reaches up and begins to caress it. (The surface he touches suggests a movie screen, but also a portrait and a mirror.)

Who is the boy? It seems easy for most people to say he's Elizabeth's son, because we learn later on that she does have a son, and because the face on the screen is the actress's face. But is it? Although the image is far from clear (this is obviously deliberate), I'm almost sure that Bergman is modulating it from Elizabeth's face to Alma's to Elizabeth's again. And if that is the case, does it change anything about the boy's identity? Or is his identity, perhaps, something we shouldn't expect to know?

In any case, the abandoned 'son' (if that's who he is) is never seen again until the close of the film, when again, more briefly, there is a complementary montage of fragmented images, ending with the child again reaching tentatively, caressingly, towards the huge blurry blow-up of the woman's face. And then Bergman cuts to the shot of the incandescent arc lamp; the carbons fade; the light slowly goes out. The film dies, as it were, before our eyes. It dies as an object or a thing does, declaring itself to be 'used up' and thus virtually outside the volition of the maker.

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Any account which leaves out or dismisses as incidental the way *Persona* begins and ends hasn't been talking about the film that Bergman made. Far from being extraneous (or pretentious), as many reviewers found it, this so-called 'frame' of *Persona* is, it seems to me, only the most explicit statement of a motif of aesthetic self-reflexiveness that runs through the entire film. This element of self-reflexiveness in the construction of *Persona* is anything but an arbitrary concern, one superadded to the 'dramatic' action. For one thing, it states on the formal level the theme of doubling or duplication that is present on a psychological level in the transactions between Alma and Elizabeth. The formal 'doublings' are the largest extension of the theme which furnishes the material of the film.

Perhaps the most striking episode, in which the formal and psychological resonances of the double theme are played out most starkly, is the monologue in which Alma describes Elizabeth's relation to her son. This is repeated twice in its entirety, the first time showing Elizabeth's face as she listens, the second time Alma's face as she speaks. The sequence closes spectacularly, terrifyingly, with the appearance of a double or composite face, half Elizabeth's and half Alma's.

Here, in the very strongest terms, Bergman is playing with the paradoxical nature of film—namely, that it always gives us the illusion of having a voyeuristic access to an untampered reality, a neutral view of things as they are. But what contemporary film-makers more and more often propose to show is the process of seeing itself—giving the viewer grounds or evidence for several different ways of seeing the same thing, which he may entertain concurrently or successively.

Bergman's use of this idea here seems to me strikingly original, but the larger intention is certainly a familiar one. In the ways that Bergman made his film self-reflexive, self-regarding, ultimately self-engorging, we should recognise not a private whim but an example of a well-established tendency. For it is precisely the energy for this sort of 'formalist' concern with the nature and paradoxes of the medium itself which was unleashed when the 19th century formal structures of 'plot' and 'characters' were demoted. What is commonly patronised as the over-exquisite self-consciousness in contemporary art, leading to a species of auto-cannibalism, can be seen—less pejoratively—as the liberation of new energies of thought and sensibility.

This, for me, is the promise behind the familiar thesis that locates the difference between traditional and so-called new cinema in the altered status of the camera—"the felt presence of the camera," as Pasolini has said. But Bergman goes beyond Pasolini's criterion, inserting into the viewer's consciousness the felt presence of the film as an object. He does this not only at the beginning and end but in the middle of *Persona*, when the image—it is a shot of Alma's horrified face—cracks like a mirror, then burns. When the next scene immediately begins (again, as if nothing had happened) the viewer has not only an almost indelible after-image of Alma's anguish but an added sense of shock, a formal-magical apprehension of the film—as if it had collapsed under the weight of registering such drastic suffering and then had been, as it were, magically reconstituted.

Bergman's procedure, with the beginning and end of *Persona* and with this terrifying caesura in the middle, is more complex than the Brechtian strategy of alienating the audience by supplying continual reminders that what they are watching is theatre (i.e., artifice rather than reality). Rather, it is a statement about the complexity of what can be seen and the way in which, in the end, the deep, unflinching knowledge of anything is destructive. To know (perceive) something intensely is eventually to consume what is known, to use it up, to be forced to move on to other things.

This principle of intensity lies at the heart of Bergman's sensibility, and determines the specific ways in which he uses the new narrative forms. Anything like the vivacity of Godard, the intellectual innocence of *Jules et Jim*, the lyricism of Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution* and Skolimowski's *Le*

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Départ, is far from Bergman's range. His work is characterised by its slowness, its deliberateness of pacing; something like the heaviness of Flaubert. And this sensibility makes for the excruciatingly unmodulated quality of *Persona* (and of *The Silence* before it), a quality only very superficially described as pessimism.

What is emotionally darkest in Bergman's film is connected particularly with a sub-theme of the main theme of doubling: the contrast between hiding or concealing and showing forth. The Latin word *persona* means the mask worn by an actor. To be a person, then, is to possess a mask; and in *Persona* both women wear masks. Elizabeth's mask is her muteness. Alma's mask is her health, her optimism, her normal life (she is engaged; she likes and is good at her work). But in the course of the film, both masks crack.

One way of putting this is to say that the violence the actress has done to herself is transferred to Alma. But that's too simple. Violence and the sense of horror and impotence are, more truly, the residual experiences of consciousness subjected to an ordeal. It isn't, as I have suggested, that Bergman is pessimistic about the human situation—as if it were a question of certain opinions. It's that the quality of his sensibility has only one true subject: the depths in which consciousness drowns. If the maintenance of personality requires the safeguarding of the integrity of masks, and the truth about a person is always the cracking of the mask, then the truth about life as a whole is the shattering of the total façade behind which lies an absolute cruelty.

It is here, I think, that one must locate the ostensibly political allusions in *Persona*. I do not find Bergman's references to Vietnam and the Six Million genuinely topical, in the manner of seemingly similar references in Godard's films. Unlike Godard, Bergman is not an historically-oriented film-maker. The TV newsreel of a Buddhist immolating himself, and the famous photograph of the little boy from the Warsaw Ghetto, are for Bergman, above all, images of total violence, of unredeemed cruelty. It's as images of what cannot be imaginatively encompassed or digested that they occur in *Persona* and are pondered by Elizabeth—rather than as occasions for right political and moral thoughts. History or politics enters *Persona* only in the form of pure violence. Bergman makes an 'aesthetic' use of violence—far from ordinary left-liberal propaganda.

His subject is, if you will, the violence of the spirit. If each of the two women violates the other in the course of *Persona*, they can be said to have at least as profoundly violated themselves. More generally the film itself seems to be violated—to merge out of and descend back into the chaos of 'cinema' and film-as-object.

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Bergman's film is profoundly upsetting, at moments terrifying. It relates the horror of the dissolution of personality (Alma crying out to Elizabeth at one point, "I'm not you!"). And it depicts the complementary horror of the theft (whether voluntary or involuntary is left unclear) of personality, what is rendered mythically as vampirism: at one point, Alma sucks Elizabeth's blood. But it is worth noting that this theme need not necessarily be treated as a horror story. Think of the very different emotional range in which this material is situated in Henry James' late novel, *The Sacred Fount*. The vampiristic exchanges between the characters in James' book, for all their undeniably disagreeable aura, are represented as partly voluntary and, in some obscure way, just. But the realm of justice (in which characters get what they 'deserve') is rigorously excluded by Bergman. The spectator isn't furnished (from some reliable outside point of view) with any idea of the true moral standing of the two women; their enmeshment is a *donnée*, not the result of some prior situation we are allowed to understand. The mood is one of desperation: all we are shown is a set of compulsions or gravitations, in which they founder, exchanging 'strength' and 'weakness'.

But perhaps the main contrast between Bergman and James on this theme derives from their differing positions with respect to language. As long as discourse continues in the James novel, the texture of the person continues. The continuity of language, of discourse, constitutes a bridge over the



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abyss of loss of personality, the foundering of the personality in absolute despair. But in *Persona* it is precisely language—its continuity—which is in question.

It might really have been anticipated. Cinema is the natural home of those who don't trust language, a natural index of the weight of suspicion lodged in the contemporary sensibility against 'the word'. As the purification of language has been envisaged as the peculiar task of modernist poetry and of prose writers like Stein and Beckett and Robbe-Grillet, so much of the new cinema has become a forum for those wishing to demonstrate the futility and duplicities of language.

In Bergman's work, the theme had already appeared in *The Silence*, with the incomprehensible language into which the translator sister descends, unable to communicate with the old porter who attends her when she lies ill, perhaps dying, in the empty hotel in the imaginary garrison city. But Bergman did not take the theme beyond the fairly banal range of the 'failure of communication' of the soul isolated and in pain, and the 'silence' that constitutes abandonment and death. In *Persona*, the notion of the burden and the failure of language is developed in a much more complex way.

Persona takes the form of a virtual monologue. Besides Alma, there are only two other speaking characters, the psychiatrist and Elizabeth's husband: they appear very briefly. For most of the film we are with the two women, in isolation at the beach—and only one of them, Alma, is talking, talking shyly but incessantly. Though the verbalisation of the world in which she is engaged always has something uncanny about it, it is at the beginning a wholly generous act, conceived for the benefit of her patient who has withdrawn from speech as some sort of contaminating activity. But the situation begins to change rapidly. The actress's silence becomes a provocation, a temptation, a trap. For what Bergman shows us is a situation reminiscent of Strindberg's famous one-act play *The Stronger*, a duel between two people, one of whom is aggressively silent. And, as in the Strindberg play, the one who talks, who spills her soul, turns out to be weaker than the one who keeps silent. (The quality of that silence is changing all the time, becoming more and more potent: the mute woman keeps changing.) As real gestures—like Alma's trustful affection—appear, they are voided by Elizabeth's relentless silence.

Alma is also betrayed by speech itself. Language is presented as an instrument of fraud and cruelty (the blaring newscast; Elizabeth's cruel letter to the psychiatrist which Alma reads); as an instrument of unmasking (Alma's excoriating portrait of the secrets of Elizabeth's motherhood); as an instrument of self-revelation (Alma's confessional narrative of the beach orgy) and as art and artifice (the lines of Electra that Elizabeth is delivering on stage when she suddenly goes

(Continued on page 212)



North Light

conversations

and

with cameramen

Cigarette Bulb

*by Charles Higham
& Joel Greenberg*



IT WAS GRATIFYING, on a recent visit to Hollywood, to find the three greatest veterans of American cinematography—Lee Garmes, James Wong Howe, and William Daniels—still enormously energetic and busily engaged on new projects. Garmes was planning an independent film with the producer Kenneth Herts to be shot on location in Australia; James Wong Howe was discussing a new Western with Henry Hathaway, and planning to direct a number of possible subjects in Hong Kong, including the story of a rickshaw boy's life to follow the realistic style of his *Go, Man Go*; and William Daniels, whose career began almost five decades ago with *Blind Husbands*, *Foolish Wives* and *Greed*, had just finished enthusiastically shooting Mark Robson's *Valley of the Dolls*, and left the interview for fifteen minutes to cast Hollywood's most experienced eye over the rushes. Talking to these magnificent survivors of more than forty years of Hollywood history, one was impressed by a strong sense of geniality, of a relaxed sense of fun, of the sheer pleasure of putting a picture together to see how the pieces work. In the harsh company town atmosphere of modern Los Angeles, an earlier American enthusiasm and warmth had miraculously been retained.

Lee Garmes

One of the really vexed questions is how much a cameraman can influence a film, change its style. What do you think about that?

GARMES: He can change it a great deal, chiefly through lighting. Very few directors know anything about lights. Von Sternberg knew a great deal, but even he couldn't see the necessity for the balance of light and shadow in a shot. In most cases, the director leaves me to my own devices. I don't like photography to *steal* a scene, when the scene is an important one. But sometimes you get a scene that is not very interesting. Then I try to get something that is very beautiful and startling, to increase the interest.

Have you been able to establish a personal signature through the films of many different directors?

Oh, yes. You can follow the style like a thread. Ever since I began, Rembrandt has been my favourite artist. I've always used his technique of north light—of having my main source of light on a set always coming from the north. He used to have a big window in his studio ceiling or at the end of the room which always caught that particular light. And of course I've followed Rembrandt in my fondness for low key. If you look at his paintings you'll see an awful lot of blacks. No strong highlights. You'll see faces and you'll see hands and portions of clothing he specifically wants you to notice, but he'll leave other details to your imagination. Of course film is transparent material, unlike canvas, and sometimes too much light gets through it, and you are apt to see things I might not want you to see. But I like to highlight significant detail, and I have been able to do this in spite of a great variety of directors. For instance, in *An American Tragedy*, I used north light in the courtroom. All the light came from that north window.

That brings us to von Sternberg. He always claims you were just a camera operator.

Well, if Joe likes to say that, that's all right. But I had already established the Rembrandt style by *Morocco*, the first picture I did with him. And he liked my style, that's why he used me. Dietrich took the north light very well. Although for some shots I changed the style, making one side of the face bright and the other side dark. I experimented with her face; at one stage she looked too much like Garbo, and you couldn't have two Garbos on the screen, so I changed her again. It was my idea to shoot her close-ups in *Morocco* at night, against a white wall at the Paramount ranch. I'd light them to look as though they were shot by daylight. It created a very beautiful effect. If I'd just been Joe's operator he'd have told me what to do. I can honestly say the Dietrich face was my creation. I'll argue with Joe till doomsday about that. And I did other things in the picture. That pattern of lights and shadows in the streets. I told him the best time to get that

effect would be at noon, with the sun directly overhead. It would cast the shadow he wanted.

Which of your films has offered similar chances?

The Paradine Case. In those days Hitchcock didn't blueprint the film as he does today, so I had to solve certain problems as we went along. He wanted shots that travelled a very long way and then you turned round and looked back at the whole set. We had to have fourth walls that slid out and back at the right moment. And we didn't have any equipment that could cope with those very long moving shots. So I experimented. The chief of the engineering shop, a man called Steve Granovich, the operator, the grip and I put our heads together and the outcome was the first crab-dolly. It was a wooden mock-up and we used it for the last part of the picture—we didn't have it in the earlier stages—and it worked well. When we went round Valli in the room where she's arrested in the opening scene we used a three-wheel light stand with the camera mounted on it. We had to have a very, very good floor for that. It was a little bumpy, but it wasn't too noticeable.

I used the crab-dolly next in *Detective Story*. Wyler was delighted with it. He didn't know what the hell it was. And I had fun in *Guest in the House*, too. We had to have very small sets for that one, shot with a wide-angle lens. I had the ceilings brought down as low as possible and made them of three thicknesses of cheesecloth stretched. They were dyed and painted so that you couldn't see the sound man, who had to be directly over them. For the exteriors we'd take pictures of New England out of magazines and enlarge them, and we set them up at various distances from the camera. You remember the scene where Aline MacMahon is clipping the hedge? Well, the thing behind her was just a cut-out building, about 10 feet high, and 14 feet wide, that's all. With a projected sky at the back. And nobody noticed.

Did you enjoy working with Ophuls on Caught?

Oh yes, very much. Max was a wonderful man to work with. We hit it off very well together. And I think he's the only director I've ever worked with who had this technique of making the camera seem to be stealing a glance at the characters. He didn't stage his people 'to' the camera as everyone else does; you got the feeling the camera was eavesdropping, that it just happened to be there.

And The Lusty Men?

There was a rodeo picture that was shot almost entirely indoors. To make that look as though it were shot in sunlight on exteriors I had to use an awful lot of light and a very sharp focus. All the time we made the picture—it was winter in California—it rained, they hadn't been able to get the script ready before the good weather ended. So you see, there was a 'special problem'.

Did CinemaScope worry you? And other new systems?

Well, yes, CinemaScope because when you first started working with it you thought, My God, the sidelines go on for ever. Luckily, CinemaScope isn't as wide now as it used to be. But the worst thing is Techniscope. That's brutal. They take a half-frame and blow it up to a full frame, you're bound to have grain. It's bad enough to take the full frame and blow it up as big as they do. Let alone half a frame . . .

How about Arriflexes?

All right if the scene calls for it. Just to use them because somebody thinks it's the thing to do, that's pointless. We've used hand-held dramatically here for years. But some of the new directors use it in a scene where the people aren't moving, and that's bad. It's good for a prize-fight, or a brawl, or a chase, otherwise it's just a mannerism.

Laboratory work seems very inferior today. Do you agree?

The Technicolor labs do a very good job, but generally, yes I do agree, prints are getting worse. It's due to the sloppy work the studios are accepting for television. Most of the labs are making so much money with television they don't bother as much as they used to with features. And producers these days don't ask the cinematographer, as they used to, to check out the colour prints. Freddie Young in England does that, and for *You Only Live Twice* he came here to look at the prints. There should be more of that.



GARBO AND GILBERT IN "FLESH AND THE DEVIL".

William Daniels

Unlike Lee Garmes, I vary my work considerably according to the story. Even my lighting of Garbo varied from picture to picture. There wasn't one Garbo face in the sense that there was a Dietrich face. I'd give each director what he wanted. But yes, I was able to improvise, to add things as well. For instance, in *Flesh and the Devil*: for the duel scene I built a special long camera runway to keep the duellists in perfect silhouette—that was quite a construction feat in those days. And in the harbour love scene I just wanted a faint glow to illuminate Garbo's and Gilbert's faces. So I gave Jack Gilbert two tiny little pencil carbons to hold. When they kissed the carbons lit up. His hands shielded the mechanism from the lens. And then again, I was able to do something interesting in *Mata Hari*. Novarro and Garbo are in a little secluded niche in a restaurant or inn. She is seducing him, and it's very romantic. I wanted to illuminate the whole scene with just the glow from his cigarette alone. I put a special window over their heads so the smoke would drift up past it and be fully visible. Then I had another idea. I'd been to a doctor and he'd put this tiny tube up my nostrils, with a brilliant little bulb in it. Now I had a dummy cigarette made with one of those medical bulbs in it, and I stuck on the ashes with glue. I mounted another cigarette under it to cause the smoke. I had a little rheostat by the camera and every time he raised the cigarette to his lips I'd bring the bulb up bright. And the smoke would go up. All you'd see, the whole source of light in the darkness, seemed to be just the one gleam . . . And in the bedroom-stroking scene in *Queen Christina*, I had a related effect, so that the entire source of light for the room seemed to come from the fire. Of course I had to cheat a little, but not much.

And apart from lighting, were you able to improvise camera movements?

Oh yes. In *Anna Karenina*, for instance, one special problem was to go right along a banqueting table in the opening scene. I solved it by building a special kind of dolly. It had wheels outside the chairs and the camera was suspended over the table. There was only room for me up there. I was on a tiny platform, and we moved eighty or ninety feet over the jugs and dishes.

What was von Stroheim like to work with?

He would only work at night, he hated being watched—there were policemen all round the set—so we had to use powerful arcs, and shoot night for day. I worked with him for six years. His great art was on the technical side. He introduced things which were completely new then, no make-up on men, real glass in windows, varnish where it should be. But in spite of his talent he was completely impractical about getting a day's work done. He could never do it in eight or ten hours, he had to have us there for twenty-four hours at a stretch. Everyone was exhausted at the end of these sessions, you'd go home for a few hours, then come back. Thalberg and Laemmle were desperate. They took away the cameras, and I went back and fetched them, and then they took away the lights.

On *Merry-go-Round* I had to iris down on a punchbowl in the party scene with the Austrian officers, and a nude girl had to get out. To get the real spirit of the thing von Stroheim served everyone real liquor. I irised down, and the lid came up, and I was to close the iris just as she emerged. Von Stroheim tapped me on the shoulder to indicate I should close the iris. I looked round at the end of the shot. He wasn't there. He'd passed out cold. Later on *Greed* we had to do the insane thing and shoot the picture in Death Valley in *midsummer*. It was 132 degrees in the shade, just rut roads the miners had used, and we slept in canvas army cots. There wasn't much water. One day Jean Hersholt, through fear, sunburn and

misery, passed out. We used arc lights for the interiors of San Francisco houses so as to get the feeling of real daylight. Von Stroheim didn't like using sets. The arcs smoked badly, and we had to have the windows open and fans as well, to keep the smoke out of the lenses. It was very difficult.

Late in the Forties, you went back to Universal, and to a realistic style—with Anthony Mann and others. Did you enjoy that period?

Yes, I enjoyed that. Of the films I made with Mann, I liked *Strategic Air Command* and *The Glenn Miller Story* best, from the camera point of view. In *Strategic Air Command*, after months of tests and searches, I decided to use a B-36 and fly in it directly over the huge glass nose, shooting through the Plexiglass bubbles. We flew at sunset and shot the cross-light. And we'd use the vapour trail because if you shoot a plane against a blue sky with nothing else in the shot it doesn't seem to be moving. The effects of the coloured clouds were very beautiful, and nothing was faked.

On *The Glenn Miller Story* I really got a chance to do something new. Or something that in a different form was what Disney had experimented with in his films. That was the last of the three-colour films, and I wanted to do something interesting. So in that scene of the jazz session in the cellar with Louis Armstrong I measured the light waves against the sound-waves from each instrument, and matched them, so that as far as I could I had each instrument coloured by the lights according to the equal frequency of the sound, red for one instrument, green for another and so on. It was different.

What has interested you in technical developments over the past twenty years?

VistaVision chiefly. A wonderful system, with those wonderful spherical lenses that gave the best definition we have had, but it wasn't promoted properly as a system. And I miss it badly.

James Wong Howe

My approach, like Daniels', is dependent largely on subject matter. But I have a basic principle that goes on from film to film: to make all the sources of light absolutely naturalistic. If you're in a room and the scene is taking place at a certain time of day, try to find out where the light would come from naturally, and follow that, don't impose an artificial style. In colour that's often difficult to control, and I prefer black and white. You can fake a 'real' look in the colour laboratory but then it becomes an achievement of chemistry, not of cinematography. Over here they use too much colour. It's unreal.

Have directors sometimes tried to overrule your naturalistic approach?

FORTIES REALISM. CAMERAWORK BY WILLIAM DANIELS FOR "THE NAKED CITY".



Sometimes, yes. Curtiz used an artificial style in the films I did with him at Warners—and I didn't like *Yankee Doodle Dandy* for that reason. In *The Thin Man* Van Dyke wanted shadows because it was a mystery—too many shadows. Often I didn't see where a light was in a room to make a shadow, but he'd say, "There's a blank space on the wall, let's fill it," and I'd make him a shadow. I threw away naturalism on that picture, unfortunately. I would have liked to use real locations on *King's Row*, and on *Seconds* I didn't want that wide-angle bug-eye lens. I wanted that journey to the operating theatre to be done in a simple style, with subjective camera. But generally I've got my own way.

What special problems did you have to solve in your first colour film, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer?

The cave scene when the children are lost after the picnic was very difficult. Technicolor in those days called for the use of 800–1000 foot candles. And if I'd used them the cave would have looked overlit. So Selznick agreed to let me use 350-foot candles—I wanted them shorter still, but I had to compromise a little. You see, they kept saying, we can't do good prints, we'll have to continue making new matrices, the prints will be too dark. So I said, make new matrices then, and luckily Selznick gave me freedom. Now all the light in that great cave had to come from Tom Sawyer's candle. The screen had to be black until they came in and then all you had to see was the glow, and the darkness had to close in behind them. It was impossibly difficult in colour. We tried hiding lights and dimming them, and it didn't work. So I got some pince-nez for the kids to wear, to protect their eyes, and I built a harness and put a globe in front of the boy so that it threw the light up through an imitation candle. I had a little shade so it didn't overlight his hands, and a kind of diffuser at the back so it would look as though the light was coming entirely from the candle. If the dripping water Selznick wanted for realism had hit the globe, the globe would have blown up and injured the boy. It was difficult!

Can you normally improvise like this?

Sure. Most directors leave the lighting to you. And sometimes they even let you direct whole sequences. On *Body and Soul* Rossen let me shoot the boxing scenes on roller skates while the grips pushed me round. I got the idea because I wanted an effect of a man being hit—he falls and sees the lights above the ring subjectively. But the studio production cameras couldn't be turned over, they weighed 150 pounds. So I decided to use hand-held. On *Hud*, Marty Ritt said to me, "That sky in Texas looks flat. Can we put clouds in?" I told him we could double-expose as many as he liked, and I ran him reels and reels of every kind of cloud, cirrus, cumulus, everything. Then I said, "We'll be *decorating* if we use clouds. It's not real. When I see this plain sky, and this heat and this hard light, it has a certain beauty." So he agreed, and where we did have clouds during the actual shooting I'd use filters to take them out, instead of the other way round.

Do actors sometimes try to control their own lighting?

Sometimes, yes. They say, "I can only be lit with a key light from this side." I have to say to them: "Here's the window, and the light comes from it. I can't change that." But sometimes I do something with the lights and they think I'm doing what they want and I'm really doing something else. You have to be a diplomat in this business.

Have you been able to introduce new techniques?

On *The Roughriders*, directed by Victor Fleming, I mounted two cameras on a wheeled platform to follow the horsemen at high speeds, and the cameras were counterbalanced, one could move up and the other could move down. One camera had a wide angle lens to hold a rider and horse in frame and the other was used for close-ups only. And that was the forerunner of the crab-dolly. I worked out a zoom lens in 1920 or 1921.

In William K. Howard's *Transatlantic* I used deep focus and ceilinged sets ten years before *Kane*. They'd never heard of 24mm. lenses at the studio—I went to downtown Los Angeles and bought them specially—and I had a terrible argument with the art director, Gordon Wiles. I said, "Make the passageways narrow. Put ceilings in." He said, "I can't, you won't be able to light them." I said, "Don't worry, I'll do it."



ABOVE: "TRANSATLANTIC". BELOW: "BODY AND SOUL".



And he did put the ceilings in and I made him change the engine-room as well, so there were more foreground pieces, more perspective. You got focus carried very far all through, although film being slower then we couldn't quite close our aperture far enough, there wasn't the exposure you have today. But I got the feeling of being on a ship. And the irony was that Gordon Wiles got the Oscar for art direction on that picture. And I didn't get an Oscar.

In *The Brave Bulls*, I had a little 16mm. camera strapped to the matador and you saw the bull-fight from his point of view, you moved with every movement of the cape. There was some grain when they blew the film up, but not much. In *Sweet Smell of Success* I got the idea of putting mushroom photoflood globes in the cocktail bars, and used Double-X film. And I washed the bar walls with oil to get the glitter. On *Hud* again I took the condensers out and used open lights in the interiors. That way I got a look of daylight—harsh Texas daylight.

Do you admire the realism of the French cameramen of the Sixties—Coutard, Decaë?

Their work has no continuity, it's catch-as-catch-can; they just go ahead arbitrarily and throw lights in. I don't think that's good. It's very difficult to achieve natural lighting. They don't seem to be aware of the difficulty. It's hardest of all, in this business, to be honest to the sources of light, to be totally real. And realism comes first with me, always.

Filmschools Filmschools

National Film School Ian Wright

HALFWAY THROUGH JULY, tantalisingly close to Parliament's summer holidays, the Department of Education and Science published a report to the Minister responsible for the Arts calling for a national film school "at the earliest possible moment." The report, a somewhat dry 47 pages of close argument (HMSO: 4s. 6d.) was the work of a high-powered committee under the barrister Lord Lloyd of Hampstead, which included among its 17 members Mr. Robert Clark of ABPC; Mr. John Davis of Rank; Mr. George Elvin of the ACTT; Mr. John Terry of the NFFC; Sir William Coldstream, the British Film Institute's chairman; and such working film-makers as Karel Reisz, Sidney Gilliat and Carl Foreman.

For the best part of eighteen months these men, as a committee or in groups, had taken evidence from pretty well everyone in this country who thought they had anything useful to say about a film school. They also made visits abroad: to the Centro Sperimentale in Rome; IDHEC in Paris; the Swedish Film School in Stockholm; and the long established Polish school at Lodz. These outings not only gave Lord Lloyd's committee some idea of the organisation of national film schools abroad and helped to pitch its sights correspond-

ingly high, but more important they brought committee members into informal contact with each other, foreshadowing the slightly surprising and hopeful unanimity of view expressed in their report.

The weight of the evidence in favour of a national film school seems to have been overwhelming. "In our view, our national culture, the film industry, and the economy will be greatly benefited by its establishment," says the report. With much weighing of pros and cons and the greatest diplomacy, it suggests that the industry could do with an infusion of new blood: a national film school could raise the standard of quality film-making, draw inspiration from the widest possible sources. "We arrive at this conclusion," says the report with tact, "without the least disparagement to the many brilliant and outstanding British films and the constant stream of highly talented British directors."

The committee bravely envisages a film school at the highest level. It should be decently academic and yet wholly practical. The cinema itself, it argues, is a medium of entertainment and an art form: likewise a school, if it is to be of value, must cope with these two (often contradictory) aspects. Suitable creative talent needs providing with a high degree of technical and professional accomplishment.

This it would seek to achieve by establishing a small school, as close to central London as possible, with an annual intake of about fifty students. It would help, says the committee, the cross-fertilisation of ideas if a proportion of these came from abroad. Most students would be aged between 20 and 28 and have had some sort of experience in another field before they came to the school. This experience need not necessarily be academic.

Producing, directing, editing, camera-work, screenwriting and design would all be taught. So would film-making for television. Courses would last for three years in most cases, each student being

required to make at least one documentary and one feature during his stay. The films would be useful references when the student emerged into the industry, and was looking for a job. No graduate, the committee concluded, would get automatic employment. The ACTT had declared itself "strongly in favour of the setting up of a national film school" to regularise entry into the industry, and qualified students, the union had promised, would be received into the union without question. But, says the report: "the contribution of the national film school must rest, in the last resort, on the quality of its graduates, and should in no way be artificially fortified by the raising of barriers against those whom it has not itself trained."

On the question of who shall teach, the report is necessarily vague. Plainly, the school couldn't have a conventional staff. But if the school is going to function as close to the industry as the committee would wish, then it must look to the industry to furnish most of the teachers on a part-time and temporary basis. "The teaching staff should include young film-makers already launched on a successful career, as well as older and more established film-makers."

To attract the sort of staff it has in mind, the committee rightly stresses that the school must have adequate resources and sufficient prestige. Above all the first director must be a person "of such standing, distinction, and capacity as to ensure the confidence of the industry itself in the future of the school." Where will such a paragon be found?

If the committee has its eye on any of the people presently teaching film in any of the institutions it singles out for mention, it doesn't say so. Indeed the report is a blow to anyone who may have hoped that a national film school might be attached to an established college or school of art. The report discusses what is presently offered by the Royal College of Art, the Hornsey



ROMAN POLANSKI (POLISH FILM SCHOOL) IN HIS "THE VAMPIRE KILLERS".

College of Art, the Ravensbourne College of Art and Design, the Regent Street Polytechnic School of Photography, the London School of Film Technique, the Drama Department at Bristol and the Film Department of the Slade School at University College, London. The committee acknowledges that there is a place for the teaching of film in art schools and universities, but says bluntly that this is not the same thing as a national film school. "We are firmly of the opinion that not only would it be inappropriate in itself for a national film school to develop as an adjunct to a school of art, but such a development might even lead to a restrictive influence on the art of film-making in this country."

The committee comes out strongly in favour of a new autonomous national film school with responsibility only to the Department of Education and Science. Only in this way would it have the independence and freedom to develop according to its needs and gain the international prestige necessary to achieve its aims. In support of this view it quotes the experience of leading continental schools. However the committee ignores the interesting example of the West German Film School at Ulm (not Munich as the report has it) which, to begin with at least, found its attachment to the Hochschule für Gestaltung useful and stimulating.

Unlike the Ulm school (which the committee might profitably have visited), the national film school envisaged here would possess elaborate stages, probably, thinks the committee, two or three. It would also have a theatre, projection rooms, cutting rooms, workshops, a design studio, possibly an animation studio, a small processing lab, lecture rooms and classrooms, a library, amenities for staff and students and possibly a student hostel.

All this in central London, the committee recognises, is not likely to be cheap. Fully equipped, and supposing that none of the material came by way of gifts (much as has already gone to art schools), a national film school now might cost in the region of £800,000. Running costs are likely to be between £150,000 and £180,000 a year. These are figures calculated for when the school is fully extended, and do not take into account fees payable by students themselves or from scholarships. The actual cost per student, calculated at £1,000-£1,200 a year, is somewhat cheaper than costs at continental schools but more expensive than existing institutions here.

The committee was unanimous in its view that the capital cost should come from the Government: "The school is to be a national institution and it cannot be left to private enterprise to provide the initial means for establishing an institution of this character." But the committee was not so decided about the recurring cost. All but one member agreed that the right thing to do was to divert to it a small part of the British Film Fund (known as Eady Money, the statutory levy on the sale of cinema tickets, the proceeds of which subsidise films qualifying as 'British'). Members were not agreed on what proportion of the national film school's annual costs should be met by Eady. Eight out of 16 were in favour of the Fund meeting the whole bill; three plumped for 75 per cent and the rest for varying proportions between 50 and 75 per cent. The Government, they thought, should pay the balance.

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What does the Government think? In a short preface to the published report, dated June 1967, Miss Jennie Lee said she had arranged "early publication" so that all those interested in its recommendations could express their views

MARCO BELLOCCHIO (CENTRO SPERIMENTALE AND THE SLADE SCHOOL).



"before any Government decisions are taken." It was pointed out in the *Financial Times* (August 11) that it is now 48 years since the first national film school was set up in Russia, and nearly ten years since the film industry here started serious talks about a school under the auspices of the British Film Institute. Lord Lloyd's committee itself took eighteen months and, as the *Guardian* remarked (July 18), listened to everyone "from Associated Television to the Westminster College Film Society." What views are we waiting for?

Certainly there are things to criticise in the style of the report. David Robinson (in the *Financial Times*) found it "turgid, repetitious and abounding in vague circumlocutions." But its chief virtue (and use) is that it pulls together, although not in the nimblest fashion, all the arguments. It sums them up and says loudly and plainly and with authority that we cannot afford to be without a national film school which should be intellectually serious and academically independent. Before Lloyd this was by no means a foregone conclusion.

Meanwhile in Curzon Street during the Summer recess, where the Ministry responsible for the Arts nestles in the austere bosom of Education, Miss Lee talked about the effect of the economic crisis and of her "shopping list for the arts." A national film school was certainly on it. £800,000 (or less) may be only the price of one medium budget picture, but there were many demands and the Government and the Treasury had to make up their minds. Without that, Miss Lee said severely, nothing could be done. Without a Government "expression of intention" even the committee, envisaged by the Lloyd Report to carry on the work, could not be set up. Without the intention, the Board of Trade could not prepare any modification of the Eady regulations. None of these things could happen without the prospect of money coming from the Treasury; and Miss Lee, the best fund-raiser the arts have, did not know when that would be.

There must be more talk until the demand gets up momentum. "Gathering the voices," Miss Lee calls it. From her point of view, choosing between the demands of a University of the Air and a national film school isn't enviable—nor at Cabinet level is the choice between either of them and, say, a new medical school.

Meanwhile at Beaconsfield, just off the A40 and twenty-five miles from London, there's a 4½-acre site which interested some of the members of the Lloyd Committee. This is Beaconsfield Studios, which belongs to King's College, Cambridge. There are three stages, sound and cutting rooms, a preview theatre and workshops. It may not be quite what is wanted, but unless someone makes up their minds about priorities, a worthwhile foothold could slip away—between committees as it were.

Film School in Sweden

Harry Schein

Mr. Schein is director of the Swedish Film Institute, which administers Sweden's three-year-old film school.

I WAS NEVER IN FAVOUR of a film school—or against it either. I always felt—and still feel—uncertain about the possibility of teaching anyone how to become an artist. But, as is the case in England today, 'everyone' in Sweden wanted a film school, and a film school therefore became a natural part of the package known as the Swedish Film Reform of 1963, with the Swedish Film Institute as its executive instrument.

Faced with the task of organising a film school—whether or not I was in favour of it—I felt we should do it as well as possible. I started by travelling around and looking at existing film schools, and I spoke, not only with the heads and staffs of these schools, but also with present and former students. The information given by the latter was in general more valuable than the information obtained from the former—something you should remember when reading this article.

None of the existing film schools seemed to me appropriate to conditions in Sweden, partly for pedagogical reasons, but also because the problems being confronted in Sweden were different from those in many other countries. The purpose of the 1963 Swedish Film Reform was to change the basic structure of Swedish feature film production by using a generous system of awards to stimulate the production of quality films; or, in other words, to make good films profitable. Since the Swedish Film School was to be operated by the Swedish Film Institute, it was to be considered a link in this process. The purpose of the school could therefore be formulated as being to find the people with enough ability to make the films that would win the awards. Or, to put it differently, the main purpose of the Swedish Film School, unlike most other film schools, was not to teach a profession but to discover talent.

The School therefore naturally concentrated on film directors and on practical film work. In this sort of situation, the education of cameramen, sound engineers and production managers became a kind of by-product of its main activity (as well as a necessity in terms of production technique within the School); but on the other hand, the fact of promising young people an education in camerawork, sound engineering and production management carries with it a responsibility towards them, and this created one of the many problems we eventually had to face.

The people we were looking for were supposed to be old enough to be able to show their artistic maturity, but not so old as to have had time to fail in other fields and choose film as a second or third alternative. Given this, the selection of students obviously became a vital issue. (One might even go so far as to say that if we could only discover the perfect selection method we wouldn't need a film school at all.) We put—and are still putting—a great deal of time and effort into designing an adequate selection method; and we have already found that when we accepted people against the advice of our professional counsellors and of specialists in this type of selection, we were generally wrong.

It was obvious from the very beginning that, with the kind of people we were looking for, the theoretical element in the School should be kept to an absolute minimum, which we have found to be about one day a week. Exercises in film shooting and the shooting of actual films constitute the predominant activity, and this emphasis on practical film work has economic consequences. It is more expensive to shoot films than to have large groups of people see and discuss films or listen to lectures. Every year the School accepts four students to

LOUIS MALLE (IDHEC) MAKING "L'ASCENSEUR POUR L'ECHAFAUD".



FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA (FILM DEPARTMENT OF UCLA).

study direction, three students to study sound and camera techniques respectively, and two to study production management, all of them for two years. Yet it costs about £100,000 a year.

We felt that the best way to start would be to give students all the technical equipment they needed and just let them go ahead and make their films; but in this respect we were much too optimistic. We were soon faced with a natural conflict between the students' need for free artistic expression on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the need for economic and technical discipline within the rather large production unit which such a school in fact is. We also found that allowing the directors complete freedom of expression made it more or less impossible for us to provide the technicians with an adequate education. They felt—and quite justifiably—like unpaid servants to the directors.

Among our teachers, we have some first-class cameramen, sound engineers and production managers, but no directors. This is in line with our original idea that you can't teach art. I still believe this idea to be basically a sound one, but we are now going to try to establish rather personal and unconventional relations between our director-students and first-class Swedish directors, so that the student will have an opportunity to get some kind of artistic and emotional response from someone with experience in the field of film-making. The Swedish directors associated with the Film School in this way will not be ordinary teachers. No important artist will give up his artistic career to become a teacher, and it would be ridiculous to have third-class artists, who had failed in the field of film-making, as teachers for students who are supposed to be going to renew the art of the cinema in Sweden.

Another problem which we faced, and which I believe to be structural for

schools of this kind, lay in the natural and accelerating conflict between generations, between the age of the School's staff and the age of its students. This makes life very hard and complicated for the School's staff. We have, through our selection method, succeeded in picking extraordinarily talented people, most of them already married and with children, the majority of them in the 25 to 28 age group and mostly people with very strong personalities. These people cannot be handled like school-children, and the economic and technical necessities of a large production unit makes it impossible to handle them like University students. And we have not yet solved the fundamental problem of how to let students discover for themselves and at great expense that they were wrong and their teachers right.

Another problem that we had to face was that of relations between the students themselves, primarily between directors on the one hand and cameramen and sound engineers on the other. Sweden is a democratic country, and it is easy to say that film-making is a matter of team-work in which everyone is equally important and co-operation a necessity. Orwell was making a bitter joke when he said that all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others. Bitter or not, in film-making it is not a joke but a fact that the director is responsible for the film, that technicians serve to carry out his intentions, and that the people we picked as director-students were intellectually superior and emotionally more complicated than the students in sound and camerawork.

In a short article of this kind it is impossible to list all the problems we had and still have, and I will therefore jump directly to some of our conclusions, with the reservation that all of our conclusions so far have been very short-lived. (I believe, incidentally, that our Film School's main advantage has been its openness, its willingness to change methods and to learn from experience.)

It is a two-year school, and we have now established a marked difference between the first and second years. During the first year the number of films produced has been cut down, and the number of shooting exercises increased. These exercises, as well as the scenarios for the short films made during the first year, are set by the School and designed not primarily to give directors a chance to show their talent, but to give them as well as the cameramen, sound engineers and production managers an all round training in the different kinds and phases of film-making. The first year is thus marked by a very strong degree of discipline, which severely limits the possibilities of free artistic expression. This discipline is the price the students have to pay for complete freedom during the second year, in which each director can make two rather long short films



JERZY SKOLIMOWSKI (POLISH FILM SCHOOL).

exactly as he wants to, provided that he stays within the budget in terms of money, time and technical facilities.

We learned another important lesson: that maximum democracy within the School administration is essential. This means, among other things, that student representatives attend every meeting of the staff and teachers and take part in decisions made by the School, both on questions of general principle and everyday detail. This democratic approach is not based on some kind of blue-eyed ideology but on the necessity of blunting the natural conflict between generations, which I believe is sharper in a film school than in almost any other field—for the simple reason that film is such a young art, that the language of film therefore changes very, very quickly, and that the gap between two age-groups increases the faster one goes.

Now to the 'results' of the Swedish Film School: we started in September 1964; the first group of students left in June 1966, the second in June 1967. Most of our former students are now employed in responsible positions within the film industry; one has already directed a feature film which has been well received, and two others are shortly to direct features. One cameraman has shot two feature films; and one of these, the colour film *Elvira Madigan*, so impressed a major Hollywood director that he wants him to shoot his next film. The short films produced at our School are not, in my opinion, very good, but are generally far better than those made in most film schools in the Western world.

So far, and within these limited terms, the School has been very successful. The extent to which it will fulfil its original purpose of renewing the art of film-making in Sweden still remains to be seen.

These conclusions all concern the

School in its present stage. I should like, however, to end this article by saying a few things about the future. Within a few years, as soon as our main building has been constructed, the Film School of the Swedish Film Institute is going to be integrated into a new national school for professional education in film, television, radio and theatre. According to the Organising Committee of this new institution, directors will be trained in two stages, each taking eighteen months. The first stage will include 32 students, most of whom will in all probability go into television. The second stage will include eight directors, four specialising in films and four in the theatre. The first stage will be quite disciplined and give a basic education in all four fields. At the higher level, in spite of specialisation, each student will also be active in the three other media. The new institution will also have two-year courses for designers and technicians.

The new institution will be much larger than our present Film School in terms of students. This involves certain disadvantages; but the main advantage will be that the more or less theoretical selection process which we use at the moment will be complemented by the final selection, which will admit only eight out of thirty-two students to the more specialised course, and will do so only after eighteen months work and personal experience. And the inter-relating of the four media will make it easier for students to find the field of expression they are most suited to. Aside from the economic advantages of this kind of integrated project, it is motivated by the fact that few Swedish directors limit themselves to only one field.

At the beginning of this article, I said that I was never convinced about the necessity of a film school. I am still not convinced, but neither am I sure that there should be no such thing. The one thing experience has taught us so far is that running a film school involves a great number of problems, some of them very, very difficult ones: that any kind of film school must be dominated by practical film work under professional conditions—which means that education on a *per capita* basis is more expensive in a film school than in almost any other field of education; that whatever form of organisation one chooses, one has to remain open to experience and be prepared to change and adjust quickly to it; that, by mathematical definition, the vast majority of students in a film school can never become important film artists, while at the same time, in an open society, a number of important film artists will emerge through other channels than the film school.

In view of all this, I am, despite the fairly stimulating years with the Swedish Film School, looking anxiously forward to the day when it becomes a part of the new national organisation and the Swedish Film Institute will be rid of this responsibility. From that time on, my life will be somewhat easier to live.

FILM REVIEWS

THE DIRTY DOZEN

ROBERT ALDRICH'S NEW FILM starts well. The setting is a claustrophobic box-like room in a U.S. military prison, and through a noose we see a pitifully deranged murderer being led in to die. As the rope is placed around his neck, the victim is still mumbling "I'm sorry" and "I didn't mean it," his muffled words billowing out the black hood that now covers his head. A close-up of the executioner's hand pressing a lever is followed by a shock cut to the dead man's feet falling through the trap-door straight into the camera, and a medium shot of the officers lining the wall staring at the taut rope that bisects the room from ceiling to floor.

During the next two-and-a-half hours (including interval) and after quitting the cinema, we are left to ponder the significance if any of this masterful opening. For thereafter Aldrich presents such an incredible mishmash of confused thinking, shallow cynicism, sentimentality, conventional army humour, gratuitous violence, as to bring into question his moral right to include this initial scene.

In terms of the plot the object of the execution is to persuade Major Reisman (Lee Marvin) to take charge of Project Amnesty, a wild scheme that involves training a squad of twelve misfits (currently awaiting the gallows or serving life sentences for rape and murder) for a behind-the-lines operation on the eve of D-Day. The target is a lightly guarded French château used as a recreation centre by senior German staff officers, and the aim is to kill as many of them as possible without regard for the lives of the numerous women present.

As a realistic incident from the last war, this story is frankly incredible. The military mentality is clearly capable of insane acts, but there was never any need to dream up a plan that necessitated recruiting incompetent, psychopathic convicts to carry it out: there were always plenty of well-qualified, apparently normal men ready to volunteer. A great fuss too is made about the suicidal nature of the mission and its peculiar unsavouriness. Again one can match the risks and the unpleasantness with a score of well-publicised real operations.

So it seems necessary to treat the movie as a fable, with possibly some contemporary reference to Vietnam, and here the director of *Attack* might be expected to give us two things: a corrosive account of army life and a bleak picture of combat.

Such is not the case, for the new up-beat Aldrich is quoted as seeing *The Dirty Dozen* (M-G-M) not as deriving from *Attack* but as a variation on his last film *The Flight of the Phoenix*: "What I'm interested in showing is how people struggle within the framework of the story to overcome what are tremendous odds."

Now a considerable point is made from the outset about the appalling material on which Reisman must work, and he sets about his task with a mixture of bullying, bribery and blackmail: the training sequences are rather like *The Way Ahead* with knuckle-dusters. Yet no effort is spared in establishing this assortment of recalcitrants, morons and psychopaths as a bunch of likeable characters, and the more they work as a team the more likeable they become. The audience is encouraged to applaud their brutality when it operates on behalf of the unit. There is no suggestion that they are the victims of the army. Indeed the reverse is true: they are redeemed by military service, not corrupted, and a march theme on the soundtrack celebrates this wholly without irony. The frequent references to Reisman's Dirty Dozen (they are first brought to act in concert by refusing to shave with cold water) could as easily be interpreted as Reisman's *Lone Crow*; maybe they should be.

Perhaps there was originally some subtle irony contained in the screenplay by Nunnally Johnson and Lukas Heller, part of an overall strategy to show these thugs as preferable to their officers. If so, this is buried so deep in the completed picture that one would need to treat the whole film as a vastly subtle joke at the expense of the American army. As it is, the generals too are shown to be a not unreasonable bunch, though as I've previously suggested there's a remorseless cynicism pervading the whole picture which leaves every kind of option open. Indeed, according to a publicity hand-

out in which the cast comment on the film, only two actors found their roles unsympathetic. One is Robert Ryan as a vindictive colonel who has it in for the unconventional Reisman: the climax of the first half sees him the scorned victim of the now cohesive twelve during a most unlikely training exercise in Devon. The other is Telly Savalas as a scripture-spouting Southern rapist: he's the only one to foul up on the mission and predictably he is shot down by the Negro soldier whom previously he has baited.

On the question of the fighting itself Aldrich has played the whole thing for conventional heroics and bloody fun, with every war cliché in the book: the opening bars of 'Deutschland über Alles' to herald the appearance of German troops, dead snipers coming through windows like Olympic divers, the wounded German recovering sufficiently to deliver that last lethal round, the staggering accuracy of the marksmanship, the man who says 'We've made it' a split second before being shot. For all its apparent pretensions, *The Dirty Dozen* lies firmly within the field of the war movie as entertainment.

The chief asset, in my view, is its gallery of interesting Hollywood faces, carefully type-cast, and most of them familiar from other war films and earlier Aldrich pictures. (Three of them—Ryan, Savalas and Charles Bronson—were actually in *Battle of the Bulge*.) But it has grafted on to the customary framework of a film like *Battle of the Bulge* many of the surface elements of more honest war films without the accompanying moral justification. The effect is arguably less a broadening of scope for the entertainment film than a devaluation of useful currency. It is equally arguable that what we see here is a final confirmation that the conventional anti-war movie of the last twenty years has reached the end of its tether.

I would scarcely have bothered going into such a detailed consideration of *The Dirty Dozen* were it not that the picture has proved one of the year's biggest box-office hits in America and opened in New York to almost uniformly favourable notices. But

"THE DIRTY DOZEN".



while most reviewers have agreed on the credibility and the entertainment value there has been some conflict between their interpretations. With two of these I should like to close. Richard Schickel writes in *Life*: "It seems one of the most interesting films about the brutalising effects of war that we have had from American filmmakers in the last decade... the true worth of *The Dirty Dozen* is as a cautionary tale, warning us of what can happen to conventional morality in time of stress." The anonymous reviewer in *Life's* stable-mate *Time* takes a very different line: "*The Dirty Dozen* is the definitive enlisted-man's picture" and "proves that Hollywood does best by World War II when it does it straight."

To produce a war film in 1967 that can appeal to hawks and doves alike, that can pack cinemas in a country engaged in one of the costliest and most frustrating wars in history, is a triumph worthy of the director who eleven years ago (according to Murray Schumach in *The Face on the Cutting Room Floor*) persuaded the Production Code administrators that in *Kiss Me Deadly* he was marrying "the commercial values of the Spillane properties with a morality that states justice is not to be found in a self-anointed, one-man vigilante."

PHILIP FRENCH

HOW I WON THE WAR

THE FIRST QUESTION one felt like asking Richard Lester after *How I Won the War* (United Artists) was whether he had seen *Les Carabiniers*. In fact he hasn't, having "a Godard gap from *Le Petit Soldat* to *Alphaville*." And if this seems like Lester's *Les Carabiniers*, in theme, in inconsequence and occasionally in attitude, there's one all-important difference. Godard chose to make a simple statement with almost baffling directness; Lester's equally simple statement is complicated through technical indirection.

Characteristically, Godard's point was not that war is horrible (that we might take for granted) but that it is an ultimate in brutish stupidity. Lester pins the brutish stupidity, as it were, on to the adulatory combat movies, the anti-war films which get caught up in their own heroics. To do so, he goes back to square one: war is horrible. But the net effect of *How I Won the War* is that it's not so much directly anti-war, as anti other war movies.

An opening sequence establishes both the point and the style. We're on the West bank of the Rhine, and young Lieutenant Goodbody (Michael Crawford), the light of battle glinting daftly in his eyes, is about to invade Germany. A rubber dinghy is inflated; Goodbody embarks; his platoon stays firmly put. The farce flickers as the soldiers wistfully contemplate this splendid opportunity for shooting their officer in the back. It dies in two crunching blows from German gun-butt.

Then we're off into flashback, as Goodbody relives his war for the benefit of his equivocally sympathetic German captor—the only person in the film he can actually talk to, the man who reassures him that "we're all civilians really," and that if there have been any little unpleasantnesses like concentration camps they haven't ruffled the watch on the Rhine. Back with Goodbody to the barrack square: the wizened joke about the two soldiers marching

resolutely off in the wrong direction; the recruit who gets a splinter in his hand from his dummy wooden rifle, and wails like a bewildered baby; the pep talk from fire-eating Colonel Grapple, for whom 'the wily Pathan' remains the only true enemy.

Michael Hordern's Grapple at this point looks like the film's most promising character, close enough to one of Evelyn Waugh's obsessed martinets to raise the level of the jokes by several notches. For the first problem with *How I Won the War* is that the basic farce is not all that funny. The central situation sounds encouraging: the landing of Goodbody's patrol miles behind enemy lines in North Africa, so that they can set up an advance cricket pitch. But as a take-off point for everything that Lester and his writer, Charles Wood, want to do with the film, its detail is too undernourished: more *Carry On*, in fact, than *Catch 22*.

Military farce, with Goodbody forever toppling over backwards in the middle of one of his stirring rallying calls, merges into fantasy, as the troop (by now including two ghost soldiers dyed boiled-sweet pink and green from head to foot) haul the heavy roller over the desert. As a counterpoint, there's the sour, separatist, one-track monologue of the men, who know that their number's on a real bullet. And there's the very strange role played by Musketeer Juniper (Jack MacGowran), who emerges in the desert in clown's pantaloons with a wooden rocking horse, plasters his jacket with swastika medals, orates wildly, punches an officer (every man his own General Patton?), and is last seen sitting at H.Q. in a straitjacket devising grand strategy.

This uneasy fantasy collapses, I suspect, because it puts an almost unassimilable strain on the film's method. In the past, Lester's hit or miss timing has worked because one knew of any effect that there were always plenty more where it came from. Here he has allowed himself few second chances: what is blurred in the technique stays blurred. Which may explain, I suspect, why the film's most successful performance is its straightest. Lee Montague as the sergeant, the one who knows the

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score, who isn't required to deviate into thin whimsy (John Lennon) or fat chuckles (Roy Kinnear), but plods on to his moment of truth, his assessment of what the war has so unfairly done to the soft man beneath the hard soldier.

This moment has truth because the character convinces. The rest exist only within the erratic contexts the film finds for them, so that when they die it's as though real blood had got mixed with sawdust stuffing. And around the moments of their deaths, Lester brings up his own heavy guns. We move out of the film's phony war into tinted monochrome newsreel images of Dunkirk, Dieppe, Alamein, Arnhem. Into the battle settings wander the men of Goodbody's patrol: death at Alamein merges into death in the film's desert. Distinctions, Lester is saying, aren't to be drawn: they all go the same way. Or they are to be drawn purposefully, as when a soldier breaks down and the men looking after him pretend to wave away the intrusive camera.

The film stakes a lot on these sequences: they have to come off all the way. Godard, one remembers, was criticised for mixing generalised newsreel shots into his fable. Lester particularises (three very emotive defeats to one victory; a deliberately provocative choice?). Are there unresolved problems of artistic tact (not just 'bad taste') which make the sequences unworkable? Or is it, as I suspect, that they need perfect assimilation and timing, and that Lester's style defies cohesion?

Success, for this absolutely serious comedy, depends on its power to jolt: to bring the audience up to the wild edge of laughter and then slam on the brakes. But Lester's fragmented, jack-in-the-box technique, with its touches of advertising man's surrealism (a woman advances over the sand dunes towards a terribly wounded soldier, telling him to "run cold water over it") splinters the impact, yields more embarrassment than real disquiet.

The tone is strident, tense, exclamatory; reasonable enough if Britain were in a deeply military mood. But in this country at this moment *How I Won the War* seems to me to be stubbing its toes by kicking ferociously at an open door. Is there an audience here, of an age and temper likely to be affected by the film, to be thrown by its anti-militaristic attitudes? Which is not to say that anti-war films need not be made, but that the booby officers and dissident troops ("shoot your own bloody officer") belong with the used stock of the Saturday night TV satirists. Beneath its abrasive technique, *How I Won the War* seems to me to be asking for a conventionally unconventional 1967 reaction: pop goes the army—or the army goes pop. And this, of course, is the sort of mental barrier which *Les Carabiniers* broke through.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

KWAIDAN

MASAKI KOBAYASHI'S *Kwaidan* (Orb), an expensive, widescreen, three-episode film based on ghost stories by Lafcadio Hearn, has been described as academic; but it is academic in the good as well as the bad sense of the word. It is slow, perhaps over-elaborate in relation to its material, and sometimes too concerned about explaining things to its audience (the middle story, for example: the use of superimposition to convey recognition). On the

other hand, the better parts of the film are a striking demonstration of what academic direction is about: a careful script, a rehearsed and controlled rather than a spontaneous and erratic style of performance, a meticulous massing of effects towards a foreordained conclusion, a respect for the audience and also for the separate creative contributions to be made by the different members of the film unit. Largely shot in the studio, *Kwaidan* has imaginative sets and décors; the colour is exceptionally subtle; and the use of electronic and natural sound in a non-naturalistic way is hauntingly and chillingly effective.

Lafcadio Hearn was an Irish-American who lectured at Tokyo University, married a Japanese, and became a Japanese subject; the three stories show varying degrees of adjustment between Western and Eastern ways of thinking and feeling. The first, *The Black Hair*, is about a samurai who divorces his wife to marry a rich woman who will bring him advancement. He is unhappy, continues to remember his first wife, and in the end returns to her to a night of love. When he awakens in the morning, however, he finds that he has been sleeping with a decayed corpse, and he is pursued through the rotting, deserted house by its black hair, the black hair of which he dreamt in his long exile. The echo of *Ugetsu Monogatari* consorts uneasily with the elements of Hammer horror. In the second story, *In a Cup of Tea* (a warrior swallows the soul of a young lord, whose ghost comes to avenge him), the emphasis is less Western; while the third and longest, *Hoichi the Earless*, undoubtedly gains its authority through its formal, Noh-like treatment.

The *Hoichi* episode begins with a description of a twelfth-century sea-battle between the Heike and the Genji: the Heike are annihilated. Centuries later a blind musician is summoned by the ghost of one of the Heike warriors to sing before them. His absences from the temple where he lives are noticed, and the priests try to protect him by painting him with sacred texts. But they forget to paint his ears, and when his nocturnal visitor arrives to call him his ears are torn from his head. In retrospect this finely expressive piece—using paintings to contrast with formalised scenes shot in a studio tank—consists of a series of recitals or tableaux, re-enactments of the legendary event; the principal of arrangement is essentially non-narrative and non-dramatic. The horrific climax belongs to a different category of the imagination, more familiar to Western audiences and for that reason less interesting. It is in the retelling of the battle as, with ragged banners flying, ship after ship moves to destruction through the smoking mist, and the faces of the warriors express only the anguish and tragedy of defeat, that the film finds its true purpose.

All good fantasy has its own logic. *Hoichi the Earless* is logical (if the priests hadn't forgotten his ears, they wouldn't have been pulled off) and so is *In a Cup of Tea* (if a man swallows someone's soul, sooner or later that someone is going to want it back). Oddly enough, though *Hoichi* is the most ambitious episode, it is the first story, *The Black Hair*, which most repays a second viewing.

The story is told from the samurai's point of view, cutting from the present and his spoilt, idle wife to recollections of the woman he cast aside. Each time he comes back to her it is merely a dream, until the final return (but this is not real, either). He asks her to forgive him, caressing her black hair; she says 'What greater happiness than



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to see you again, even for a moment?" to which he replies, sealing his own doom, 'Nothing shall ever separate us again.' She is a ghost with awareness, a succubus come from the grave to find her own momentary happiness, a demon released from hell to pursue her betrayer: only on a second viewing can the way this part is played be properly appreciated.

JAMES PRICE

BONNIE AND CLYDE

BONNIE PARKER AND CLYDE BARROW, of course, were real-life gangsters, genuine Thirties vintage but with a reputation which seems to have been more fantasy than fact; and right from the outset of his film *Bonnie and Clyde* (Warner-Pathé), Arthur Penn firmly roots them in ambiguity. Behind the credits, the sound of a clicking camera shutter ticks off the facts as we watch a series of faded snapshots from the Barrow gang's family albums. Then, in the opening sequence, Bonnie (Faye Dunaway), a restless Southern blonde, peers eagerly out of her bedroom window to catch her first glimpse of Clyde (Warren Beatty), leering and primping in flash tie, tilted hat and tight-fitting suit on the sidewalk below—the myth of Paul Muni's Scarface come to life again.

"Wait there!" she cries, and a moment later he's snapping a casual match between his teeth as she runs a wondering hand over the gun he displays. "You wouldn't have the gumption to use it," she says, so he robs the grocery store across the street, steals a car, and whisks her off with a breathless "Hey! What's your name, anyhow?" From there on, as Bonnie and Clyde prance off on a bumbling life of crime (the first bank they rob turns out to have been closed three weeks previously for lack of funds, and Clyde has to save face by getting the cashier to explain to Bonnie), Penn drives unerringly through a mood and *milieu*

which look like the result of a shotgun marriage between *Cat Ballou* and *Bande à Part*.

Inefficiency gives way to a sort of crass efficacy as they gain experience. The gang is swelled by the arrival of Clyde's brother, a firm believer in family solidarity; by the latter's wife, whose main contribution is loud screams and an attack of hysteria whenever the bullets begin to fly; and by a diminutive car expert whose fixed grin of idiot beatitude remains unchanged, whether he's carefully parking his car in a minispace seconds before an urgent getaway is due, or peacefully watching Ginger Rogers and the Goldiggers singing "We're in the Money" in the cinema to which they all repair for anxious meditation after killing their first cop. And soon they are caught up in a whirlwind spree through the highways of the South, punctuated by violent clashes with the police and oases of calm.

But the ghost of the real-life Al Capone has been keeping a fatherly eye on this marriage of moods. Violence breeds violence, and gradually the fantasy turns sour. First the brother dies in a forest clearing with half his face shot away, his blinded wife is taken off to hospital, and the gang melts away. Then Bonnie and Clyde, still unaware of the reality which has overtaken them, are caught in a crossfire of police bullets which batters on as though it would never stop, refusing to allow their jerking bodies to come to rest (an astonishing use of slow motion, this: it makes Paul Newman's death in *The Left-handed Gun* look like child's play).

Penn handles the shift in mood quite brilliantly—and almost imperceptibly, as an ambivalence towards the characters has been present since the very beginning. Like Godard's heroes in *Bande à Part*, Bonnie and Clyde embark on their life of crime utterly without malice or forethought. ("He tried to kill me," Clyde complains with astonishment when a victim hits back with an axe, "Why'd he do that? I didn't want to hurt him?") They even have a kind of morality of their own, which Penn hints at in a bizarre sequence when they



"BONNIE AND CLYDE": WARREN BEATTY AND FAYE DUNAWAY.

wake up one morning in an abandoned farmhouse to be confronted by the evicted farmer and his family with their possessions loaded on to an ancient truck, "victims of man's inhumanity to man" like the Joads in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The have-nots of the Depression seal a weird, unspoken bargain as Clyde offers the farmer his gun to shoot holes through the bank's takeover sign, explaining in a confidential aside, "We rob banks." And the confidence is not broken when the police net begins to close, and a silent, mourning band of poor farmers help the tired, blood-spattered remnants of the gang on their way with food and water.

But more than this, it is the lyricism of the film which guides one's attitudes to the characters, turning amusement (or revulsion, according to taste) into comprehension and finally pity. Turning his back on the urban chiaroscuro of the gangster film, Penn opts for the unexpected with a green and golden landscape of forest glades, cornfields, open roads, bright days and blue skies, to which Bonnie and Clyde escape from the wooden shacks and dusty streets of the small towns where they commit their robberies. There is a kind of unashamed pastoral tranquillity running through the settings which is beautifully caught in Burnett Guffey's stunning camerawork, and which reflects a need of which Bonnie and Clyde only gradually become aware as they realise that they, like Ferdinand and Marianne on their island paradise in *Pierrot le Fou*, are quite alone.

In a superb sequence, ironically tinged (both literally and metaphorically) with a nostalgic mist of regret, Bonnie pays a visit to her home, only to realise, after a family picnic among the sand dunes, that there is no way back. "You'd best keep runnin'," her gentle old white-haired mother says with cold finality. So they keep running, until ambushing policemen startle a flock of birds, and Bonnie and Clyde die together in a quiet country lane.

A few years ago, Truffaut, Godard and the Nouvelle Vague stole the gangster film from America and gave it new blood. Now Penn has taken it back home where it

belongs, and in so doing has found a match for his temperament. In the past, particularly with *The Miracle Worker* and *Mickey One*, he has tended to become involved with subjects too hysteria-prone for their own good. But *Bonnie and Clyde* can take all the violence and tenderness he has, and still keep coming back for more.

TOM MILNE

LES DEMOISELLES DE ROCHEFORT

THE DUBBED VERSION OF *Les Demoiselles de Rochefort* (Warner-Pathé) is a very coy film; an anthology of sentimental cliché, in which the inventive details of narrative and imagery only pour ironic fuel on the chocolate-box extravagance. A film I admire, on the other hand, is the original, which has been showing in Paris for several months. The problems of translating Jacques Demy's gentle mariavodage into an English idiom, of reproducing a particular Gallic tightrope walk between tenderness and whimsy, plus a catastrophic decision to show the film on the Cinerama screen: these, more than the familiar vicissitudes of dubbing, have sunk the English version.

It must be allowed that Demy is an habitual offender on the count of sentimentality, and there are embarrassing lapses in this musical, as there have been in his previous films; yet he is capable of a tender, unsentimental euphoria more intoxicating than any other film work in the field of sentimental farce. And there is one strain of this delicate rapture that belongs to French art alone, ethereal, all too fragile, declining to coyness much as Ustinov's charm dissipates into eastern European whimsy: suddenly the miracle of the *farce rose* becomes the contrivance of outworn convention, the merriment becomes forced gaiety and weary schmaltz, vulgar and insensitive. And Demy, never far from cliché, is precipitated into these lapses by

translation: the economical dialogue, the enchanting lyrics turn banal; and Cinerama distorts the exquisitely balanced frames in a particularly unfortunate manner—Demy's candy-floss carnival is mocked by the big curving screen as crooked mirrors mock a fairground crowd.

Just as the dialogue is converted into all the simple-minded corn which Demy had modified into an entrancing simplicity, the theatrical fantasia of Rochefort, painted a musical-comedy dreamscape, is distorted from a subtle delirium into the grotesque self-parody Ghislain Cloquet had painstakingly avoided. What Coutard did for *Lola*, Cloquet had done for *Demoiselles*, a magical spell of light and shade which offset the fairytale narrative to perfection. As the visual poise is disturbed, the density of the narrative is dissipated in the English version: all Demy's films are highly concentrated, full of minute correspondences and parallels, most of which have disappeared in the banal exchanges that now drag the narrative to its familiar conclusion (little encouragement to pursue the added intricacy of Demy's plots, intensified by serialisation—characters overlapping from film to film, so that each story unfolds more than one multiple farce, with subtle anticipations and echoes only more enjoyable on repeated viewing). Even the actors' air of enjoyment seems strained, the narrative complexities seem artifice, the pictorial inventiveness a luscious joke... like *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, the film comes across as garish, synthetic, and coy. But in fact the colour is less hysterical, the Legrand score less schmaltzy, the plot less sentimental: the original *Demoiselles de Rochefort* marks a return to the imaginative poise of *Lola*.

Whatever this dubbed version may indicate, Demy is still capable of prodigious achievements; he can be trite and affected—but he can create miracles of unselfpitying poignancy in the highly stylised world of the operetta, where few artists tread with such Mozartian felicity—not merely charming or amusing, but profoundly moving.

CAREY HARRISON

(NOTE: This review was written before the distributors decided to let London see the French version as well as the dubbed one.)

LORD LOVE A DUCK

MAYBE IT IS putting it too strongly to suggest that *Lord Love a Duck* (United Artists) is Axelrod's *L'Age d'or*; but his first feature as a director certainly shows him taking a sharp bite not only at the commercial values which fed him as a scriptwriter, but at a society which is busily processing, packaging and psychoanalysing reality away in a layer of protective wrapping.

The way Axelrod chooses to make his attack is through a kooky updating of the old legend of the magician who gives the beautiful princess three wishes. Alan Musgrave (Roddy McDowall), high school student of enormous IQ, introduces himself to the beautiful Barbara Anne (Tuesday Weld) as Mollymauk, a fabulous bird generally believed to be extinct. Waving the hypnotic open sesame of a bunch of keys before her eyes, he promises her anything in the world she wants. Thirteen cashmere sweaters, a beach holiday and a handsome husband later, he helpfully murders the

husband who stands in the way of her final desire—Hollywood stardom—and is carted off to an asylum where he infuriates the psychiatrist with his serene self-possession. "Don't fight me, Alan," she pleads as he persists in seeing beautiful things in her Rorschach cards, "Don't you realise that these things are *supposed* to be dirty?"

The line, of course, is vintage Axelrod, and *Lord Love a Duck* looks and sounds exactly as one would expect: brilliantly, inconsequentially, anarchically funny, and full of kooky characters, from the film producer obsessed by salesworthy titles ("I Married a Teenage Bikini Vampire"), to Lola Albright's ageing bunny hostess mother brooding over the secret of Cary Grant's ageless profile, or Ruth Gordon's matron with an inexhaustible repertoire of appreciative noises for new drinks and young men. With something of Tashlin's taste for surrealistic gags, Axelrod also has the dialogue to cap his visuals. Roddy McDowall's last and successful attempt to murder the husband, for instance, has him pursuing his victim—now confined to a wheelchair as a result of previous assaults—round the school grounds in a bulldozer with a monster grab. "Golly Moses, Al," says the blandly unsuspecting victim, "what big *teeth* it has." And a moment later one hears a last plaintive query, "Alan, have I said anything to offend you?"

The answer, of course, is that *everything* offends Alan. The principal of the air-conditioned nightmare school who accuses the "Professor of Plant Skills" of teaching pornography because he still thinks of his subject as botany and talks of pistils, stamens and cross-fertilisation; the lecturer on sex who teaches his class infallible skills in recognising physiological stop signs ("Knowing When and How to Say No Without Actually Offending"); the marriage counsellors, the manipulators, the Drive-In Church where the service is suspended for transmission of an appeal to the owner of car Number . . . and so on.

Mollymauk's self-appointed task is to sow a little anarchy in this cosy packaged society, and he begins with an excellent job on Barbara Anne. When she wants twelve cashmere sweaters to qualify for an exclusive sorority, he demonstrates by a simple equation how to manipulate them, with bonus, from a divorced daddy (Divorce + Guilt² = Sweaters 13). Her acquisitive instincts stimulated and only partly satisfied, Mollymauk finds little difficulty in leading on until Barbara Anne, her eye on the last glittering prize of stardom, acquiesces in murder.

"I did it for love," he explains in his cell at the end; a highly acceptable answer, and one in the best Hollywood tradition, were it not that Mollymauk prefaces it with the caution, "It would be kinder if I invented an answer that would not upset your tiny minds . . ." Cunning Mr. Axelrod has given *Lord Love a Duck* a surface which need not upset tiny minds too much. It can be enjoyed for the fleeting sidelong jokes, like the shot of a pregnant student singing "Gaudeamus Igitur" at graduation day ceremony; for the bouncing black comedy round sex and murder; for the magical air of romance which hangs over Alan's first moonlit meeting with Barbara Anne on the roof of the deserted school; for the cool splendours of Daniel Fapp's photography and all the performances (especially the splendid trio of variations on the American woman by Lola Albright, Tuesday Weld and Ruth Gordon). And one can set aside the bitter taste of loneliness and despair in

the death of the poor, drunken, disreputable bunny hostess, Barbara Anne's mother, which means the timely removal of the only obstacle to an advantageous marriage. Did she fall by her own hand, or was she pushed, victim to her daughter's need to be part of the acquisitive society?

TOM MILNE

THE WHISPERERS

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN a film and the original material on which it is based are often more revealing than the similarities, especially when those differences are almost entirely in atmosphere and mood. Bryan Forbes, who has adapted his screenplay for *The Whisperers* (United Artists) from a short novel by Robert Nicolson, has faithfully followed its somewhat arbitrary plot-line and even retained much of the dialogue; but the impressions produced by book and film are so widely divergent that it is worth noting the points of departure, particularly since this is a film whose interest lies more in its implications than in its surface.

Nicolson's story is set in the Glasgow slums and is largely a character sketch of Mrs. Ross, a slightly dotty old woman living alone in squalid poverty, but finding consolation in her delusion that she is a gentlewoman of extensive means and in her cunning campaign against the imaginary 'whisperers' whom she believes to be spying on her. She becomes involved in melodramatic encounters with robbery and violence through her scapegrace son and her shifty, long-lost husband, who is restored to her by the welfare authorities after a spell in a mental hospital has successfully stripped her of all her comforting hallucinations. For a little while they live together in hygienic non-communication; then Archie is off again on a more profitable ploy, leaving his wife to sink back into dirt and delusion, but free to recover in her fantasy life the only identity which satisfies her.

The screenplay forsakes the almost cosy regional earthiness of the book for a deliberately anonymous industrial limbo and a neutral speech-pattern which certainly heightens the impression of a hostile environment, but at the same time takes the mood far away from the flat realism at which Forbes, as director, seems to be aiming. The air of unreality, inevitable to some extent because of the mechanics of the plot, is further emphasised by the presentation of the minor characters, so that some of Nicolson's quite believable rogues emerge as Dickensian grotesques. The well-meaning welfare visitor becomes Kenneth Griffith at his most insinuatingly ominous; and there is a chilling little cameo by Robin Bailey as a smug psychiatrist, which in a different context might be a neat satirical touch. The concern for Mrs. Ross shown by the Assistance Board staff is considerably diminished in the film, which also adds a couple of instances of gratuitous violence. A librarian, moving among the indigent regulars in the public reading-room, aims a casual blow at one old man; a young thug, calling on Mrs. Ross in search of her husband, strikes her viciously across the face.

It all adds up to a nightmare world which might be acceptable if it were presented as part of the fantasy in Mrs. Ross's muddled mind. But there is no evidence in the treatment that such a view was intended. It is all presented as if it were being offered as serious social comment on life in Britain today. And it is being accepted as such by American reviewers. Of course, there is an element of social criticism in both novel and film. But all that Nicolson seems to be saying, at least until he becomes over-involved in his plot, is that if the welfare services could show more tolerance and imagination in dealing with lonely people like Mrs. Ross, there would be more happiness and understanding all round.

Evidently his theme made a genuine appeal to Bryan Forbes—no one is likely to tackle so obviously uncommercial a subject unless he has a real emotional involvement

"LORD LOVE A DUCK": RODDY McDOWALL AND VICTIM.



with it—and he has set about the portrayal of Mrs. Ross with an altogether admirable integrity. It is a completely unsentimental picture of a tiresome but pitiable old woman; and the first few reels, which concentrate intensely on the monotonous trivia of her daily life, are oddly compelling. Edith Evans has sunk herself completely into the slightly insanitary skin of the part and shirks none of the uglier manifestations of old age and failing wits. Intuitive playing of this quality inevitably makes mere competence look a little mechanical. This, together with the theatrical plot inherited from the novel, may partly account for the fact that the second half of the film, in which we almost lose sight of Mrs. Ross while following the seedily entertaining activities of her husband (Eric Portman), does not really work, or if it works at all, does so on a quite different, melodramatic level.

None of this, however, quite explains the sour taste left by the film as a whole. Does Forbes really see the Welfare State as a sort of depersonalised urban hell in which senseless cruelty flourishes and no eccentricity can be tolerated? Probably not, but his film is ambiguous enough to bear that interpretation.

BRENDA DAVIES

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

THE SMALL HOURS of a steaming hot night in the town of Sparta, Mississippi. In a seedy roadside café even the fly on the wall looks ready to drop. Slumped over the bar a policeman dribbles through his straw, drags himself to his feet, and walks out to his car, leaving the man behind the bar to flick at the fly with an elastic band. The patrolman drives through the still, sleeping town, stops to watch a girl flaunting her naked body at a window. Further into town the car stops again, its headlights picking out a body in the road, very dead. It isn't long before a negro, waiting at the station for a train, has been hauled in to answer some questions.

Nothing quite matches this opening sequence of *In the Heat of the Night* (United Artists). But this is an uncommonly alive little thriller, knowing just what it wants to do and doing it well; and any qualms one may have after the negro is arrested that this is going to be another of those cinematic sorties into the Deep South are soon dispelled. This whipping-boy is a nigger in the woodpile. "What did you hit him with?" asks the redneck police chief (Rod Steiger), gum between his teeth. "Hit whom?" the negro (Sidney Poitier) punctiliously replies. The police chief laughs at him, but the smile is wiped off his face when the negro turns out to be a fellow police officer, no less than Philadelphia's top homicide expert, as ready to discuss orchid varieties with a plantation owner (and to return his slap in the face) as he is to point out discrepancies in a doctor's post mortem on the murdered man. The dice are cast for a classic confrontation, and the southern police chief has two reasons for resenting this intruder from the north; but by the end the two men's mutual hostility has given way to an edgy familiarity, even a grudging respect.

Their relationship, cleverly developed in Stirling Silliphant's agile script, is the backbone of the film. The script and the two



EDITH EVANS IN "THE WHISPERERS".

actors (Poitier, given the chance at last, is better than he has been for some time, and Steiger's police chief is a beautifully observed, inventive performance) make the film. But Norman Jewison once again shows himself to be a director with a real feeling for a setting and its details—here the police office with its faulty air-conditioning, the unfriendly, white-walled station waiting-room which sets the town right from the start as one of those places where trains stop in the middle of the night, and the town itself, hot and sticky and unwelcoming.

Jewison is much helped by Haskell Wexler's hard, sharp lighting and imaginative framing, in all the night scenes, and in one superbly constructed daylight sequence in which a suspect plunges through a golden autumn wood, dogs at his heels, and out on to a bridge, and the camera pulls back to watch him stagger across, then moves away to take in the police chief calmly waiting in his car to cut him off. Wexler's camerawork frequently gives an extra dimension to the ambivalence of the main theme, the way each man warily plays off the other. When the negro finally boards the train and the police chief hands him his suitcase, the two men know a little more about each other and each other's prejudices.

DAVID WILSON

TWO FOR THE ROAD

TWO FOR THE ROAD (Fox) would be a far better film if it could only decide which of three lanes it wanted to drive in—comedy, farce or philosophical comment. Its essential problem is that it is trying to use a Proustian technique to make a Euclidian statement. For the mutual acrimony of Mark and Joanna Wallace (Albert Finney and Audrey Hepburn) develops geometrically, notwithstanding the fact that—linked by a commentary that is situated ambivalently between stream-of-

consciousness and conversation—the narrative thread weaves its way in and out of six different time planes, as changing vistas of the French countryside evoke remembrances of holidays past.

Although Frederic Raphael's script makes superficial concessions to the idea that experience is formless and apt to be distorted by memory, he in fact demonstrates the contrary by endowing his principal characters with total, and unconflicting, recall; and every remark that passes between them in their carefree youth, repeated at a later stage in their relationship, turns out to have been laden all along with ironic significance. As the couple sit in silence over an expensive meal, Audrey Hepburn toys with the food on her plate and the soundtrack echoes a question she had put ingenuously to Mark shortly after they first became lovers: "What sort of people sit in a restaurant and don't even *try* to talk to each other?" Only this time his answer, "Married people!" rings heavy with innuendo.

Since an exact balance is kept between the Wallaces' mounting unhappiness and their growing riches, the audience is never even momentarily confused by the film's labyrinthine structure. Every object functions as a visible correlative, as Mark replaces his old M.G., first with a Triumph Herald, then with a Mercedes 230. However, director Stanley Donen's concentration on the visual and the external constitutes the film's main appeal. The best moments in *Two for the Road* are those in which the audience is free to surrender to the sheer visual pleasure of Christopher Challis' photography, every detail of which serves to remind us that this is after all a film about two people on holiday.

Apart from an irritating recurring shot of foliage imposed on the Wallaces' faces by the reflecting windscreen, the drive through France is a sustained paean to sunshine and colour. There is one especially beautiful, almost surrealist sequence in which the mellow tones of the Provençal summer scene are transformed into a winter snowscape, as firemen deluge the Wallaces' burning M.G. and the surrounding countryside with foam. And against this background Audrey Hepburn and Albert Finney, whether engaged in elegant bickering or chasing one another in and out of the water, demonstrate more economically and less ponderously than the script that what people say they feel is not necessarily descriptive of what they really feel; or, more simply, that it's possible to have a good time without exactly being happy.

On this level the film's symmetrical dialogue and jigsaw-puzzle view of reality are more than acceptable; but it will keep driving off at a tangent. Eleanor Bron, cast as Mark's ex-girl friend, an American whose accent moves unconcernedly from State to State, consigns the Wallaces' second holiday to the realm of broad farce, as does Donen's use of accelerated shots to convey the frenzied pace of the Americans' sight-seeing schedule. But later on when, under Mark's supervision, a bulldozer crashes through a sandcastle on the beach Joanna has said she'll "always think of as ours"—or when her French lover looks into her eyes, and ours, to declare, "There's no such thing as permanence any more"—the film suggests portentous comparisons with Antonioni that it is embarrassingly unable to sustain.

JAN DAWSON

FILM CLIPS

PEOPLE MAKE FILMS in the oddest places these days: indeed, it is getting so that practically the last place you would look for a film in production is Pinewood or Elstree or Shepperton. And not only for obvious location pictures, but for many that would automatically have been studio-based only a couple of years ago. I was therefore not so surprised as I might have been to find that interior shooting on Kevin Billington's first cinema film, currently called *Interlude* (third title), was taking place not in a studio, but in an empty house on the west side of Regent's Park. And not alone, it would seem: when I made my way to the basement production office, the first thing they asked me was whether I had got the right film—perhaps after all I might be wanting the other, shooting four doors down.

But no. This was the place. On the ground floor is the flat occupied by Sally (Barbara Ferris), the young girl reporter who falls in love with a temperamental conductor she is sent to interview. Halfway up is Kevin Billington's sanctum, and aloft a floor has been done over to represent the bedroom shared by the conductor (Oskar Werner) and his wife (Virginia Maskell) off in the country.

When I arrived the company were busy on a scene—the first hint of impending crisis that the wife receives—which was to be played out in one long and rather intricate take, as Oskar Werner and Virginia Maskell wander in and out of shot between the bedroom and its adjoining bathroom. Obviously Kevin Billington is finding no difficulty in working with actors, though this is the first time after a career spent entirely in television documentary. Certainly his cast seem to hang on his words with more flattering attention than many far more seasoned film directors can command. And indeed, come to think of it, if his documentaries do not involve directing professional actors, the Muggeridge and Mary McCarthy films at least require their centre-pieces to perform; they are about people rather than things.

"The fundamental difference is that in my sort of documentary you create your reality by selection; in the fiction film you create your reality before selecting from it. But the keynote is still *selection*. That's one reason why I like shooting entirely on location: there's more there than you can ever get in. Here, for instance," (by now we

were sitting in the heroine's flat downstairs) "the camera will never show those books; perhaps I may never shoot towards that wall at all. But they're there; the detail's there, and it makes up the fabric of this girl's life. You get a feeling, and the actress gets a feeling, of a world which continues out of frame."

Like many another director to break out from black-and-white and small screens, Mr. Billington confesses to having gone mad with colour at the start. "I had Sally's flat decorated like my own, with bright red chairs and lots of colour everywhere. But it looked horrible on the screen, and not in her character; she's lively, and gay, and young, but also she's gentle and romantic. These" (pointing to the Morrissey patterned curtains in golden browns) "these are her world. And the hero's wife—her world is crisp, clear, cool, all blues and greys and precise, uncluttered shapes. Until she begins to find out about Sally, and then the distinctions start to get blurred . . ."

When it suits his purpose, Mr. Billington can be a stickler for documentary accuracy: for a sequence in which his hero conducts a concert on television he called in the BBC's specialist, Humphrey Burton, and had him direct the concert for television while the colour camera observed him doing so. But elsewhere the film will not avoid expansive romantic gestures: a screen original written by Lee Langley with Barbara Ferris in mind, it is unashamedly romantic, a dreamlike summer interlude

with, especially in the sequences involving the girl, a hazy other-worldly quality achieved largely by extensive use of 300 and even 600 mm. zoom lenses to pinpoint distant figures in sharp focus while leaving the foreground an abstract coloured blur.

And clearly Kevin Billington is loving every moment of it. After a preliminary fit of panic when shown round Shepperton and offered the glittering prospect of, "*Oliver, Half a Sixpence*, and tucked away somewhere, on the furthest, most insignificant stage, *Interlude*, the smallest can of beans in the supermarket," he has settled down very happily in his own small domain. Did he hope to go on making cinema films? "I've hardly had a chance to think beyond what I'm doing now. But yes, I suppose so . . . Oh, yes, certainly. Being asked to make a film is, you know, like being asked to make love for two solid months. It sounds marvellous, and it sounds awful; there'll be times when it's heaven, and times when it's hell, and times when it just won't work at all. And you know all this to begin with. But all the same, who in his right mind is going to refuse?"

HAVING MANAGED TO overcome the obvious hazards of censorship without dropping a frame, *Blow-Up* seems now to be giving M-G-M a headache for rather unexpected reasons. Already people have started writing to *Films and Filming* with the old

"INTERLUDE": BARBARA FERRIS, OSKAR WERNER.





OSKAR WERNER IN "INTERLUDE".

complaint that the film has been obviously cut for release, why can't distributors respect the intelligence of the provincial cinemagoer, etc., etc. Has it?

M-G-M say that it certainly has not; that the version showing at our friendly neighbourhood cinema does not differ in any respect from that which played at the London Pavilion. Obviously breaks there may be here and there, but if so it is over M-G-M's dead body. And the reason is not far to seek. Given that cinema projectionists by and large are a fine body of men, there are still, it appears, one or two less responsible members of the profession who on occasion consider a clipping or two from the sexier scenes in the films they handle as part of the perks. And undeniably you see rather more for your money in *Blow-Up* than is usual in films given a general circuit release. Hence the additional hazard. Metro have been taking a strong line to protect their prints in their integral state. So if you fancy that you are seeing less than you ought to in, say, the three-cornered romp amid the purple paper, at least you may for once be sure that this is none of the distributor's doing.

There is another slight mystery about *Blow-Up* on release. I note, and so have several friends of mine, that in the sequence which features a topless, though still relatively modest, Vanessa Redgrave, we seem to be given rather less to look at in the suburbs than we were in the West End—not, this time, because frames have been removed, but because there seems to be less of the frame there in the first place. Is it possible that a further blow-up has taken place, affecting just those frames which revealed rather too much of Miss Redgrave?

I have not succeeded in getting any official statement from M-G-M, but my inquiries among projectionists, cinema managers and such have come up with what seems to be an explanation. Apparently it is all a matter of racking. On the film itself there is a fair amount of play upwards and downwards from what is normally pro-

jected on the screen. The further down towards the lower edge of the frame you go, the more you see. In the West End, apparently, the projectionists discovered this, and racked the film up as far as possible so that Miss Redgrave was clearly visible from the waist up. Since then an instruction would seem to have gone out that the film is to be framed in such a way that only the upper portion of the breasts may be glimpsed. What intrigues me now, though, is who first thought this access of modesty a good idea. Antonioni? Miss Redgrave? M-G-M? But answer comes there none . . .

I MET VIVIEN LEIGH only once. It was in the line of duty, as I was called upon to interview her. I did not take to her terribly, nor did she, obviously, to me. Our exchange was short and, undeniably, sharp—which took me rather by surprise, because I am anything but what is called an attacking interviewer. And yet in retrospect it ties up in my mind with her particular and very special qualities as an actress and as a star. There are, it seems, certain wrestlers who decide early in their career to cast themselves as the anti-body, the performers who never play for sympathy, but remain proudly aloof from all question of whether the audience likes them, is with them, or not. Vivien Leigh on stage and screen often had something of that same proud defiance.

It was not, certainly, that she took the relatively easy way of being the star you love to hate; she did not choose to play villains any more than she chose to play sympathy-traps. Her speciality was that sort of character which requires an audience's appraisal rather than its involvement. Most actors demand, directly or indirectly, that the audience should be drawn in: if they cannot love, at least they can hate. Vivien Leigh, almost alone of the major stars, seemed able to live in a world of her own, unconcerned with what people really felt about her or the characters she portrayed.

This, obviously, was why she was the best imaginable Scarlett O'Hara. Any of the other contestants for the part would surely have weighted the character too much one way or the other, guiding the audience's sympathies. Vivien Leigh simply was, as Scarlett was, superbly unconcerned about how we might judge her. If one may follow this line further, it is to see in all Vivien Leigh's great roles—Lady Hamilton, Anna Karenina, Blanche Dubois, Mrs. Treadwell in *Ship of Fools*—something of the same private quality, the same detachment.

One of the obituaries took the line that Vivien Leigh was not perhaps much of an actress, but at least she was a great star. That seems to me putting the cart before the horse. She was a great star, of course (didn't she win two Oscars?), but she managed to be one in spite of lacking nearly all the qualities which make for easy audience acceptance. She was beautiful, certainly, and magnetic. But she never lost a certain coldness; she was small, sharp, crystal-clear; she was not easy to love, not over-eager to charm, not at all comfortable. She forced respect because she did not beg for anything. She knew her limitations and rarely (only as Lady Macbeth and as Shakespeare's Cleopatra, perhaps) overstepped them. And what she did she did immaculately well, with perfect command of her craft. It is difficult to think of a star who has been more completely an actress, less readily a mere personality. Like her? Not necessarily. But miss her? We shall all do that.

I LOVE HANDOUTS. But I'm afraid the composition of them in properly grandiloquent and idiotic style is becoming a lost art. Too often nowadays they achieve a mere stolid, glum literacy in place of the inspired extravagance of former times. However, Fox are having a real go with the breathless information sheets on *Star!* The latest to come into my hands starts encouragingly, thus:

"The footsteps of the fabulously exciting stage star Gertrude Lawrence in Europe were not vastly widespread but they are indelible enough to require Robert Wise to transport a key staff of 30 specialists and technicians to Southern France and England in order to transcribe the most colorful of these footprints into Todd AO, De Luxe color film for his 20th Century-Fox roadshow, *Star!*, which permits Julie Andrews to play Gertrude Lawrence."

Somehow it all makes Gertrude Lawrence's career sound more like a problem for the public health authorities than a triumphal progress—especially when the handout goes on euphorically to talk of "18 days of activities on 14 separate spots where Miss Lawrence has left imprints of her fame." And I like the genteel touch about "permitting" Julie Andrews to play G.L.; surely it requires her to do so, since it would be decidedly unfortunate if she turned out all the while to be playing Sarah Bernhardt instead. But then, how could Miss Andrews resist the temptation to play "a Clapham-born Cockney girl who tugged herself literally by frayed bootstraps out of squalid surroundings toward a glittering world where eventually she became a true queen without the advantage of royalty"?

Amanda Ros, thou should'st be living at this hour!

ARKADIN

MEETINGS WITH PABST

Lotte Eisner

G. W. Pabst died in May, 1967, aged 81.

FOR SEVERAL YEARS, things had become quiet around G. W. Pabst. On the few occasions I went to Vienna I usually dropped in at Schottenring 28 to see the great old man. He was always pleased to have visitors, though he had grown rather tired and his one hand trembled slightly. But it never occurred to me then that he was so much older than the other so-called "German" directors—most of them being Austrians like himself—and when I heard of his 80th birthday and wrote and got a rather trembling line of thanks from him back, I remembered how we first met.

It must have been some time in 1929, one of my first visits to a studio as a young journalist. Studios still seemed to me rather thrilling at that time—a sort of hot, colourful jungle with cables like creepers all over the floor. It was rather noisy in those days of silent film: people rushing to and fro on the *plateau* and on the bridge where the lamps hung, machines heated to the utmost for lighting and atmosphere. Everything seemed dense and stifling.

In a corner sat a very beautiful girl reading the aphorisms of Schopenhauer in an English translation. It seemed absurd that such a beautiful girl should be reading Schopenhauer, and I thought quite angrily that this was some sly publicity stunt of Pabst's. Some twenty-five years later, I found out that Louise Brooks really *did* read Schopenhauer . . . Pabst, I remember, told me that day how delighted he was with a completely new shot he had invented—mounting the camera on a mobile trolley with a turntable attached, for a single shot in which he wanted to follow Louise Brooks up a winding staircase and along a corridor.

Pabst was then at the height of his career, a powerful man with piercing eyes, full of energy and rather ironical; nevertheless, even when working under pressure in the studio, very amiable and considerate. One always felt he had been an actor; there was something flexible about him, something slightly elusive. He was not yet the "champion of realism" he was to become some years later. At that time all the great German directors were rivals and even enemies; Pabst's principal rival was Fritz Lang and they disliked each other heartily. But they had the same ardour and tenacity: pioneers who loved to discover new and unthought of possibilities for the camera.

I really got to know Pabst more thoroughly when I had fled to Paris in 1933, after Hitler's rise to power. His situation was different from that of the rest of us—other refugees like Lang, Kortner, Peter Lorre, whom I met quite often. Pabst

was already "established" as a French film director, known all over the place. Catherine Hessling, first wife of Jean Renoir, had asked me to come to the studio where Pabst was shooting *Du Haut en Bas*, a film about the destinies of people in an apartment house. (I remember, by the way, meeting there a young and still unknown actor called Jean Gabin who, I thought, had quite a future in his somehow sympathetic, rough and still clumsy way.)

At that time I saw quite a bit of both Lang and Pabst, each reproaching me with "why do you see so much of that dreadful person?" I remember how Pabst one day told me about a film he would love to shoot; and I wrote about it some years later (around 1938), when Henri Langlois and Georges Franju were publishing their shortlived and now very rare journal called *Cinéma—tographie*. This was the heroic period of the Cinémathèque Française: without a house, without money, with just some trunks full of treasures, a bathroom full of films, and a small cineclub called *le cercle du cinéma*.

I was fascinated by this film which Pabst never shot. It was to be played on a packetboat, out at sea with an elegant international crowd of passengers. Suddenly the radio operator intercepts a message: war has been declared. And all of a sudden everyone mistrusts everyone else; people who seemed decent disclose how mean they can be; hatred grows wildly; terrible things are said and happen—even murder. Then, when everyone is at his worst, the boat reaches land and one finds out that there is no war, that the radio operator has gone crazy and invented it all. And the mood becomes one of shame at what has happened. A characteristic subject for Pabst and his "X-ray eye camera", as *Close Up* used to call his supple method of analysing psychological intention.

The war Pabst had imagined for his film was already hanging over all of us; and when it came Pabst had left France and we had other things on our minds. I plunged underground and when, after liberation, I came up again, I heard strange rumours about the man who had made *Mademoiselle Docteur* and had later shot films in Nazi Germany. Had he really been, as some people pretended, a spy?

In 1946 I had to go to Vienna and Henri Langlois asked me to see Pabst. I went, I remember, rather reluctantly. He came to greet me with arms outstretched. And I said: "G.W., I don't come as an old friend, but sent by the Cinémathèque Française." He was upset that I could have believed all those rumours, and begged me to question him. So I asked why he had been in Berlin at the time of Munich, and in Vienna when war broke out. He proved to me that he had been in

LEFT TO RIGHT: GARBO IN "THE JOYLESS STREET", LOUISE BROOKS IN "PANDORA'S BOX", BRIGITTE HELM IN "CRISIS".



Berlin because his father-in-law had been ill and died there—here was the death notice. And the same thing had happened to his own father in Vienna, at the beginning of the war. Then fate had pursued him: here were still the tickets for his and his family's passage to the States. But he had had to lift a heavy trunk and injured himself—here was the bill for the clinic where he had his operation. I told him rather harshly that in Edgar Wallace's stories (which Bert Brecht had taught me to read for relaxation), the man with the perfect alibi was always the guilty one . . .

So fate and his wife's demands sent him back to Germany, where he shot films which no longer had the force of *Kameradschaft* and *Westfront 1918*. (Pabst could not resist filming—it was as though he was on that packetboat he had told me about, and as weak as his own gay international crowd. Pointless to ask what might have become of him if his *A Modern Hero* had been a success, and he had stayed like Fritz Lang in the United States . . .) He was very enthusiastic then about *Der Prozess*, the new film he wanted to shoot. And I felt that he

meant this film to be a sort of atonement.

Years passed, years that somehow buried all the resentment we had felt. *Der Prozess* had been quite a success, and his reputation was restored. But the films he shot after that (except for one of his Hitler pictures) lacked the old strength. It was somehow not the old Pabst any more—the strong man of the left wing. I met him again in Munich. And even if he seemed once more the brilliant, witty, assured talker, there hung about him a cloud of despair he could never quite overcome. An attitude, however, which made you feel closer to him.

Last time I saw him in Vienna he was an old, tired man, trying to live up from time to time to his great pre-war name. And I wondered if Pabst, had he been able to shoot his film about the packetboat, might have had the strength to resist the temptation to direct films in Hitler's Germany. And I try to think of him now as the great director of *Pandora's Box*, *Diary of a Lost Girl*, and the sound films belonging to the era before 1933.

BOOK REVIEWS

A WORLD ON FILM, by Stanley Kauffmann. (Harper & Row, New York. \$7.95.) **FILMS AND FEELINGS**, by Raymond Durnat. Illustrated. (Faber & Faber, 45s.)

THESE TWO BOOKS have little in common beyond the fact that both are about the cinema and each fails to live up to the extravagant claims made on the dustjacket. Further, I'd hazard the guess that neither writer would much like the other. Durnat would regard Kauffmann, rather patronisingly, as one of the "visiting firemen who drop nonchalantly into film criticism from their great cultural heights," while Kauffmann would contemptuously dismiss Durnat's writing as so much "film journal swill." Both suggest that the only thing that might possibly bring about a temporary truce would be a call to join forces and beat up Richard Roud.

A World on Film is a selection of weekly columns that Kauffmann wrote for *The New Republic* between 1958 and 1965, when he became drama critic of *The New York Times*. (He is now back at *The New Republic* as chief book reviewer.) Kauffmann is an intelligent, liberal New Yorker who writes well and brings to the subject a balanced, humane view of life, a formidable knowledge of literature and the cinema (in which he's worked as actor and director) and a rigorous critical mind.

It is a useful book to have around to dip into, especially for someone unacquainted with Kauffmann's work. Several of the pieces are models of their kind. There are for instance first-class reviews of Antonioni (the only contemporary director he wholeheartedly admires) and a penetrating assessment of Arthur Miller. He never makes a literary allusion merely for effect (note the light he throws on *The Eclipse* by an apt quotation from Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*), and he always has something illuminating to say about acting. His touchstone of excellence is Marlon Brando (who made his stage debut in a play by Kauffmann) and of badness Burt Lancaster (who, we're informed, attended the same school as the author).

But reading someone week by week and taking the whole thing in a hefty 400-page dose are quite different experiences. At weekly intervals I found it stimulating and a real pleasure to read (and usually disagree with) someone who expresses himself so cogently and in such forthright fashion. Only occasionally are the opinions downright silly—for example when he says of George Cukor that "comedy is not his genius," or that "the Eastmancolor, as always,

looks washed out compared with Technicolor." As to *The Angry Silence* being "technically above reproach" or Christopher Plummer being the only English-speaking actor with a range comparable with Brando's, we've all written things we now regret (though Kauffmann hasn't chosen to retract anything).

At the end of the book, however, I emerged slightly deadened by Kauffmann's consistent lack of generosity, his virtual inability to discern merit in the American cinema, his reluctance to revise an opinion, his uncomprehending hostility to the star system. Furthermore, though he has arranged his pieces by subject (rather arbitrarily I feel) or by national origin of picture, *A World on Film* is inadequate as the conspectus of world cinema over the past decade which its publishers claim it is. Not only are there too many omissions and a grave disproportion in the coverage, but a critic would have to possess a most extraordinary genius for balance and foresight to expect his *ad hoc* reviews to stand up to the scrutiny such a claim invites.

We are grateful for *Agee on Film* and Robert Warshow's *The Immediate Experience* because neither author lived to write the book he was preparing. But also because of the fascinating personalities both books reveal and the seminal essays they contain. Kauffmann (widely, if not universally, regarded as their successor) is happily still with us, but unhappily he has reached for the scissors-and-paste instead of writing a real, and possibly rather short book. Some of the seeds for this study are to be found in his final essay "The Film Generation," the only original piece in the book, and unfortunately he has left them in the packet. I hope he still might write it, though I must confess that I prefer him on literature and the theatre, which seem closer to his heart.

There is little doubt where Raymond Durnat's heart lies: permanently in the fifth row of the stalls. His enthusiasm for the cinema is boundless and inspiring, his knowledge vast, and his memory prodigious. Sad to say then that *Films and Feelings*, for all that I agree with much it contains, is just this side of unreadable. There are admittedly worse books on the cinema than this (during the past month I've been confronted with two that actually were unreadable), but for a writer whose chief preoccupation is style and form to care so little about his own is indicative of . . . well, something or other. One of Durnat's less endearing traits, for instance, is a habit of sprinkling almost every sentence with meaningless inverted commas. "The 30's school awareness of the Hollywood 'system' went with a certain sympathy for the artist who was trapped in it" suggests to me that Durnat is questioning the existence of a system. Yet fifteen pages later he says that "Hitchcock does say some things, not only *despite* the system, but *by means of* the system." Where have all the commas gone?

Half the book is made up of seven articles on style based on a post-graduate research thesis at the Slade School. This part deserves attention for its numerous insights, which are well worth seeking out among the banalities and statements of the obvious. I must admit, however, that at the end I was at a loss to know just what Durnat's thesis is, except that different directors have different styles, that some writers and actors determine a film's style ("the mere fact that the public follows stars proves that a star is an *auteur*"), and that it isn't easy to distinguish between form and content. He is at his best when sticking to lists of notes as he does in his engaging piece on "Architecture in, and of, the Movies".

The rest of the book is an assortment of essays about stars, aesthetics, specific films, and the poetry of the cinema. Again there are some excellent ideas lurking here, buried amid a mass of wild

assertions, dubious cultural history and material that would just about pass muster as lively chat in the National Film Theatre bar.

The principal recurrent feature is Durnat's loathing of critics and intellectuals and his admiration for the sturdy good sense of the average moviegoer. Not since the 1930s can the term 'masses' have been used so often and with such approbation. "For the masses . . .," "As far as the masses are concerned . . ." and so on, constitute arguments in themselves. A chapter on stars is introduced with the observation that "the general public responds to stars and critics like to differentiate themselves from the uneducated." SIGHT AND SOUND contributors (usually referred to as 'a team') are singled out for his particular scorn; they typify "a fading English critical orthodoxy" as "heirs to an upper-middle-class climate of English cultural habit and opinion." Durnat makes clear that "it is a professional deformity which sees films in order to have an opinion about them." True enough, but like nearly all his targets, these critics—even when they bear familiar names—are mostly men of straw, wheeled on stage to be mown down by the nuts and bolts from his blunderbuss.

This general tone conflicts unhappily with Durnat's professed aims. According to the dustjacket blurb (which as a minor student of style myself I infer to be the author's own work), "the book begins to establish a common language, a common awareness" between intellectuals and ordinary cinemagoers, and its "implications often extend . . . to ways of closing some of the aesthetic and socio-cultural gaps which bedevil our culture." One such gap his missionary zeal seeks to close is described in the introduction thus:

"Many 'academic' critics, while meeting with a generous fairmindedness different opinions emanating from their own cultural 'strata', seem to fear, when invited to adjust some ideas so as to include rather than to dismiss the often rougher but no less generous responses of the 'uneducated' public, that they are being asked to abjure the special responsiveness which is in itself a cultural achievement, and which has about it just a little of 'spilled religion' (not forgetting 'displaced snobbery'), and to surrender to the mob and to the moguls."

If Durnat proposes to convert the likes of Stanley Kauffmann with this stuff he'd be better advised to use a club or a bottle of chloroform. And leaving aside someone as fastidious as Kauffmann, he's scarcely likely to win literary friends, though he might influence a few common people, by asserting that "If Shakespeare weren't a great poet he would be one of the worst scenarists in literary history" or "a really good scriptwriter can establish with one short line of dialogue what many a novelist chooses to spin out into a chapter of rumination, trivia, noodling notation, and so on."

As uncommitted readers of *International Times* will be aware, Durnat is quite capable of fatuities way beyond anything to be found here. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence to support the belief that with the help of a sympathetic editor and a strong shot of self-criticism he should be able to pull himself way above his present level. And write a first-rate, or at least reasonably persuasive, book. As it is, *Films and Feelings* can only safely be prescribed for movie addicts.

PHILIP FRENCH

'NEATH THE MASK: THE STORY OF THE EAST FAMILY, by John M. East. Illustrated. (Allen and Unwin, 55s.)

JOHN M. EAST's story of his own family is a curious, inexpert, endearing and rather important book. Its hero, the most distinguished member of the East tribe, was John Marlborough East. But distinguished is a comparative term; in the history of the British theatre he is a distinctly minor figure, who would at most rate a line or two in any record. He never made *The Green Room Book* or *Who's Who in the Theatre*. And this is what makes the present book so valuable, for it is perhaps the first time that we have had a thoroughly researched, painstakingly documented record of an obscure, but very busy Victorian actor-manager. The account of his life as a young actor in shaky touring fit-ups in the 1880s; his experiences as a young hopeful in London in the nineties, shed light on humbler areas of theatrical activity often neglected by historians. The record of his period of management at the Lyric, Hammersmith provides a lot of new material on the early years of this interesting theatre; and we learn much about the activities, social as well as artistic, of suburban theatres of the late nineteenth century.

All this bears ultimately upon the cinema, because East, at a time when economic conditions and changing tastes were beginning to displace the theatre that had bred him, turned to films. In 1913 he was engaged by the newly formed London Film Company. In 1914 he was involved in the establishment of the first studios at Elstree

by the Neptune Film Company; and, having acted in practically all the firm's productions, he was financially involved in its failure in 1921. He continued to play in films until his death in 1924, working on location in a famine-ridden Lithuania for Harold Shaw's *Land of Mysteries* (1919), and in the Stoll version of *Kipps* (1921) with George K. Arthur.

What is revealing is to see the sort of artists and traditions from which the British silent cinema, in its middle period, derived. East, like a great many more, was steeped in the traditions of Victorian popular theatre—a theatre which strongly influenced the early movie repertoire (Neptune, for instance, made *Enoch Arden* and *The Harbour Lights*). But there were more positive inheritances from the theatre too: a practical way of approaching specific stage problems, which led the Neptune people, for instance, to see the sense of location shooting; the quite fearless flamboyance which had encouraged East, a year or so before he entered films, to stage *Invasion*, a war-scene spectacle intended to turn public and government attention to the need for armament, mounted in the grounds of the Crystal Palace with 600 extras, a real airship, and the nightly destruction of a peaceful English village, maypole and all.

The best and worst of the tradition—the cliché sentiment and the spectacular flourish—must have been most strikingly demonstrated in Neptune's *The Coal King*, a capital and labour story with a plot of terrible banality combined with a spectacularly staged colliery disaster and coal-face location shooting. Not the least of the merits of Mr. East's book is that he arouses curiosity to see these old home-grown oddities.

DAVID ROBINSON

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE COMPLETE BOOK OF AMATEUR FILM MAKING. By Philip Grosset (Evans Brothers, 45s.)

COMMUNICATION AND COMPREHENSION. By J. M. Trenaman. (Longmans, 35s.)

FILM AND TV GRAPHICS. By Walter Herdig and John Halas. (Studio Vista, £5 5s.)

FILM CENSORS AND THE LAW. By Neville March Hunnings. (Allen and Unwin, 63s.)

FILMKUNSTLER A-Z. By Joachim Reichow. (VEB Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig, 7.50 MDN.)

THE FILM TILL NOW. By Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith. (1967 Edition, Spring Books, 42s.)

IT ISN'T ALL GREEK TO ME. By Peter Bull. (Peter Davies, 30s.)

MOVIE MAN. By David Thomson. (Secker and Warburg, 42s.)

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CORRESPONDENCE

Films as Evidence

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—There is a great need to promote discussion of the uses of film as historical evidence, and to encourage historians to grapple with film as an instrument of teaching and research, and Miss Houston's article, "The Nature of the Evidence", in the Spring SIGHT AND SOUND, is therefore very welcome. But it is a pity that Miss Houston should hinder the cause she wishes to forward by what seem to be unduly pessimistic reflections upon the historical value of film as compared with, especially, the written record.

Miss Houston contrives to suggest that the use of film as a historical source involves peculiar difficulties from which the written record is somehow exempt. This contrast between tainted film and the whiter-than-white 'objective written record' is an odd one. Of course the difficulties about the use of film that Miss Houston raises are real ones, but they are hardly special to film: they apply to much of the written record as well. Many of the written documents with which historians work are in no sense 'objective' or 'impartial'. Like films, they can be, and frequently are, inaccurate, tendentious, emotive, and even faked.

Miss Houston seems to suppose that good (i.e. written) evidence is, so to speak, 'inert' or 'neutral', offering itself to clinical analysis without by its form and nature 'contaminating' the historian's mind; whereas film evidence, carrying 'its own built-in comment', tends to some degree to impose its own response, a response which changes with the audience. This is hardly a true distinction. All evidence, except the most barely factual and statistical, tends in some measure, by its nature and presentation, to 'contaminate' the mind of the observer, and to produce a reaction which it partially controls, but which will vary from one observer to the next and from one period to another with the same observer. A historian's sources necessarily operate on his intelligence and sensibilities as the latter operate on them: film is not going to rape the poor fellow in a way in which other sources can't.

Miss Houston is right to warn that the historian using film must reckon with 'the unfixed nature of the image, and its partisanship'. But he is already well accustomed to doing just this with all types of evidence. There is no reason to suppose that the faculty will

suddenly desert him when he is shut up in the dark before the screen. The problems of film as a historical source are only the problems raised by all source material. Film may possibly raise some of them in acute form, but the peculiar dangers of its use ought not to be exaggerated if historians are to be induced to give it greater recognition.

A number of historians, as Miss Houston indicates, are now thinking seriously about the value of film for research and teaching purposes, and the time has probably arrived for some organised effort to assess just what can be done with film, and to make a start on doing it (the work of the Film Department of the Slade School at University College, London, has already pointed the way). We need, too, a major effort to ascertain exactly what film material is available, to ensure its preservation, and to secure freer access to it for research workers than is sometimes possible at present. If Miss Houston's article does something to stimulate this, she will have deserved historians' thanks.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL SMITH

Department of History,
King's College, London.

The Stranger

SIR,—A full six years after its initial trade showings and limited, unsuccessful (generally) commercial bookings, Roger Corman's *The Stranger*, with William Shatner (now a star of American TV) as the outsider who agitates a race riot in a small Southern town on the eve of the local high school integration, is finally getting the widespread booking it deserves—although, as such things sometimes go in this country, under false pretences and another title. It is being given saturation screenings around the country as the lower half of a double-bill with Douglas Fowley's *Bayou*, retitled *Poor White Trash*, and 'introducing' Timothy Carey, a very long, long way, performance-wise, from Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*. Oh, by the way, the new title given Corman's film: *I Hate Your Guts* . . .

Yours faithfully,
DAN BATES

New York 17, N.Y.

In Error

SIR,—Errors of fact in SIGHT AND SOUND are so rare that it's a real shock when one is encountered. In the Summer number there are two.

Whoever told your caption writer that *Underworld* (1927) was a 1929 movie? And whoever wrote the *El Dorado* caption couldn't, surely, have seen the film, or he wouldn't have mistaken James Caan for Bob Mitchum—especially with that hat!

Yours faithfully,
G. G. PATTERSON

Toronto, Ontario.

PERSONA

continued from page 191

silent; the radio drama Alma turns on in her hospital room that makes the actress smile). What *Persona* demonstrates is the lack of an appropriate language, a language that's genuinely full. All that is left is a language of lacunae, befitting a narrative strung along a set of lacunae or gaps in the 'explanation'. It is these absences of sense or lacunae of speech which become, in *Persona*, more potent than words, while the person who places faith in words is brought down from relative composure and confidence to hysterical anguish.

Here, indeed, is the most powerful instance of the motif of exchange. The actress creates a void by her silence. The nurse, by speaking, falls into it—depleting herself. Sickened almost by the vertigo opened up by the absence of language, Alma at one point begs Elizabeth just to repeat nonsense phrases that she hurls at her. But during all the time at the beach, despite every kind of tact, cajolery and anguished pleading, Elizabeth refuses (obstinately? maliciously? helplessly?) to speak. She has only one lapse. This happens when Alma, in a fury, threatens her with a pot of scalding water. The terrified Elizabeth backs against the wall screaming "No, don't hurt me!" and for the moment Alma is triumphant. But Elizabeth instantly resumes her silence. The only other time the actress speaks is late in the film—here, the time is ambiguous—when, in the bare hospital room (again?), Alma is shown bending over her bed, begging her to say just one word. Impassively, Elizabeth complies. The word is 'Nothing'.

At the end of *Persona*, mask and person, speech and silence, actor and 'soul' remain divided—however parasitically, even vampiristically, they are shown to be intertwined.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UNITED ARTISTS for *How I Won the War*, *The Whisperers*, *Persona*, *Lord Love a Duck*.
M-G-M for *The Vampire Killers*, *Body and Soul*, *The Dirty Dozen*, *Guns in the Afternoon*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Flesh and the Devil*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Major Dundee*, *The Game is Over*, *La Cina è Vicina*, and photograph of Marco Bellocchio.
WARNER-PATHE for *Bonnie and Clyde*, photograph of Francis Ford Coppola.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Morocco*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *Transatlantic*.
MONARCH for *The Naked City*.
ORB for *Kwaidan*.
HAMMER/SEVEN ARTS for *The Anniversary*.
DOMINO/COLUMBIA for *Interlude*.
CAVALCADE/UNIVERSAL PICTURES for *Work is a Four Letter Word*.
LES FILMS DU CAROSSE/ARTISTES ASSOCIES/DINO DE LAURENTIIS/
GILLES JACOB for *La Mariée était en Noir*.
LES FILMS DU LOSANGE/ROME PARIS FILMS for *La Collectionneuse*.
PARIS FILM PRODUCTION (PARIS)/FIVE FILM (ROME) for *Belle de Jour*.
PETER SCHAMONI FILM for *Alle Jahre wieder*.
ANOUGHKA/ATHOS/PARC/SIMA for *La Chinoise*.
MIFUNE/TOHO for *Rebellion*.
UNIFRANCE FILM for photograph of Louis Malle.
RICHARD ROUD for *Loin du Vietnam*.
TOWA/KING PRODUCTION for *The Button War of Topo Gigio*.
ELISABETH FILMS for photograph of Jerzy Skolimowski.
CESKOSLOVENSKY FILM/TIBOR BORSKY for *Like a House on Fire*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Crisis*, *The Joyless Street*, *Pandora's Box*.

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SOLE AGENTS for U.S.A.: Eastern News Distributors, 155 West 15th Street New York 10011.
PRINTED BY Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd., London, England.
BLOCKS by W. F. Sedgwick Ltd., London.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES (4 issues), 20s. including postage.
USA.: \$4. Price per copy in United States, \$1.
PUBLICATION DATES: 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, and 1st October.
Overseas Editions: 12th of these months.

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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two three or four stars.

AFRICA ADDIO (*Golden Era*) The dark continent through the jaundiced eyes of Jacopetti and Prosperi, a hotchpotch look at the twilight of empire and the new nationalism. More seriously slanted than *Mondo Cane*, but no less offensive. (Technicolor, Techniscope.)

BITTER FRUIT (*Contemporary*) Curiously dated story of underground political activity in an unidentified South American police state, with Emmanuèle Riva as a rebel who gets caught and Laurent Terzieff as her interrogator. Quite unconvincing. (Beba Loncar, Roger Coggio; director, Jacqueline Audry. Eastman Colour.)

BOBO, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) Embarrassing comedy with Peter Sellers lip-synching his way through the part of a singing matador—one of those sad-eyed clowns with a noble heart inside—who sacrifices himself for love of an expensive tart. (Peter Sellers, Britt Ekland; director, Robert Parrish. Technicolor.)

******BONNIE AND CLYDE** (*Warner-Pathé*) America of the Thirties, jazz, gangsters and the Depression: all rolled by Arthur Penn into a hilarious, violent, tenderly anarchic ballad of the exploits of an incompetently budding Al Capone and his moll. (Warren Beatty, Faye Dunaway. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

COSA NOSTRA, AN ARCH ENEMY OF THE F.B.I. (*Warner-Pathé*) Melodramatic toughie about the tracking down of two ageing Mafia bosses, with parricides on a Sophoclean scale. Full of high-pitched patriotics. (Walter Pidgeon, Telly Savalas; director, Don Medford. Technicolor.)

DEADLY BEES, THE (*Paramount*) Madman cultivates strain of killer bees, silly heroine gets in the way. A nicely staged and quite promising shocker which receives a mortal sting from Robert Bloch's killer script. (Suzanna Leigh, Guy Doleman, Frank Finlay; director, Freddie Francis. Technicolor.)

*****DEMOISELLES DE ROCHEFORT, LES** (*Warner-Pathé*) Jacques Demy's sympathetic attempt to Gallicise the American musical. Pixie charm and pastel colours aplenty, but the spell is very fragile. (Catherine Deneuve, Françoise Dorléac, Danielle Darrieux, Gene Kelly. Technicolor print, Franscope.) Reviewed.

*****DIRTY DOZEN, THE** (*M-G-M*) Twelve misfits, rapists and murderers trained for a special World War Two mission and proving themselves as heroic as the next man. Brutal, implausible, and revealing an unsavoury moral ambiguity. (Lee Marvin, John Cassavetes, Robert Ryan, Telly Savalas; director, Robert Aldrich. Metrocolor, 70 mm.) Reviewed.

*****DIVORCE AMERICAN STYLE** (*Columbia*) Sharp, snappish and heartfelt Hollywood comedy about what alimony does to the American male. Some sentimental falterings here and there, but also fine, woebegone jokes about the economics of divorce. (Dick Van Dyke, Debbie Reynolds, Jason Robards, Jean Simmons; director, Bud Yorkin. Technicolor.)

*****DON'T MAKE WAVES** (*M-G-M*) Mild, irresolute comedy about the lives of swimming pool salesmen, muscle men, skydivers, etc., in dreamy California. Very incoherent, as though someone had taken a hacksaw to the plot, but amiable in its irrelevancies. (Tony Curtis, Claudia Cardinale, Robert Webber; director, Alexander Mackendrick. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

*****DUTCHMAN** (*Planet*) Brilliantly spare, edgy adaptation of LeRoi Jones' flaring racial-sexual duologue between white girl and coloured man on the New York subway. Impeccable direction from Anthony Harvey in his first film. (Shirley Knight, Al Freeman, Jr.)

*****EL DORADO** (*Paramount*) Virtually a remake of *Rio Bravo* and none the worse for that. A typical Hawksian mixture of horseplay and violence with the familiar stalwart friends pitted against a nasty cattle gang. Some may find it old-fashioned, but it's easy just to sit back and enjoy the Master at work. (John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, James Caan. Technicolor.)

*****EVERY YOUNG MAN** (*Contemporary*) Beautifully observed two-part study, in now familiar Czech *pointilliste* manner, of barracks life. Touchingly funny about the vulnerability of its young, innocent and very unutilitarian conscripts. (Hana Ruzickova, Pavel Landovsky; director, Pavel Juracek.)

*****FATHOM** (*Fox*) Pretty spy film send-up with a delightfully energetic performance from Raquel Welch as the Californian skydiver press-ganged into adventure. Handsome Spanish locations and much good humour. (Tony Franciosa; director, Leslie Martinson. DeLuxe Color, Franscope.)

*****GAME IS OVER, THE** (*Columbia*) Mad Vadim frolic, adapted from Zola's *La Curée*, in which an ageing businessman machinates the doom of his new young wife while she and his son caper like amorous puppies. Outstandingly beautiful art direction (Jean André) and photography (Claude Renoir). (Jane Fonda, Peter McEnery, Michel Piccoli. Technicolor, Panavision.)

*****GRAND PRIX** (*M-G-M/Cinerama*) Frankenstein invades the world of Formula One motor-racing with an infectious enthusiasm that splits his screen into splendid fragments. His cursory script tends to leave the cast by the wayside; otherwise this is a magnificently photographed summary of everything one associates both with the sport and with Frankenstein. (Yves Montand, James Garner, Eva Marie Saint, Toshiro Mifune. Metrocolor, Super-Panavision 70.)

GUIDE FOR THE MARRIED MAN, A (*Fox*) Walter Matthau as the novice in adultery, taking lessons from Robert Morse. Depressing comedy with leading players pinned down like the club bore and his victim, while guest stars act out sniggering playlets on the art of wife deception. (Inger Stevens; director, Gene Kelly. DeLuxe Color, Panavision.)

*****HOW I WON THE WAR** (*United Artists*) The memoirs of Lieutenant Ernest Goodbody, from barrack square to the Rhine. Anti-war comedy, full of forceful, zany, inventive ideas, too many of which it can't control. (Michael Crawford, John Lennon, Roy Kinnear; director, Richard Lester. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.

HURRY SUNDOWN (*Paramount*) Prelinger in the Deep South, grappling predictably with the Negro Problem just after the war. Michael Caine affects an odd Georgia accent as the negro-baiter in chief, and the darkies burst into song when the white men go a-hunting. All the old Prelinger themes, but the direction is surprisingly impersonal. (Jane Fonda, John Phillip Law, Robert Hooks, Diahann Carroll. Technicolor, Panavision.)

*****IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT** (*United Artists*) Intelligent, pleasingly quirky thriller with coloured homicide expert (Sidney Poitier) invading the Deep South to do a Maigret and achieve a kind of loving with crosspatch local police chief (Rod Steiger). Beautifully shot by Haskell Wexler. (Director, Norman Jewison. DeLuxe Color.) Reviewed.

KARATE KILLERS, THE (*M-G-M*) Under-par UNCLE epic, graced (very briefly) by Joan Crawford as a black widow, but remaining undistinguished. (Robert Vaughn, David McCallum, Curd Jürgens; director, Barry Shear. Metrocolor.)

*****KWAIDAN** (*Orb*) Kobayashi's extraordinary trio of ghost stories adapted from Lafcadio Hearn. Bizarre, beautifully controlled, and visually ravishing—like a scroll-painting brought to life. (Rentaro Mikuni, Ganemon Nakamura, Katsuo Nakamura. Eastman Colour, Toho-scope.) Reviewed.

LONG DUEL, THE (*Rank*) Back with the British Raj on the North West Frontier. Yul Brynner leads a band of rebels harassed by stern traditionalist Harry Andrews; Trevor Howard is the only one who understands the natives. Very old hat. (Charlotte Rampling; director, Ken Annakin. Technicolor, Panavision.)

******MASCULIN FEMININ** (*Gala*) Godard's eleventh, and as expected unexpected as the other ten. "15 Precise Facts" about life today: tenderness and tragedy, interviews and insolence, youth and yé-yé. (Jean-Pierre Léaud, Chantal Goya, Marlène Jobert.)

*****OUR MOTHER'S HOUSE** (*M-G-M*) Family of children bury dead mother in the garden; wicked father turns up to steal their inheritance. Half Grand Guignol, half weepy sentiment, and ending up rather uncomfortably as neither. (Dirk Bogarde, Pamela Franklin; director, Jack Clayton. Metrocolor.)

PENTHOUSE, THE (*Paramount*) Stage-bound adaptation of the play about two sinister meter men who terrorise a couple in a flat at the top of an empty skyscraper. Echoes of Pinter, but the menace is contrived. (Terence Morgan, Suzy Kendall, Tony Beckley, Norman Rodway; director, Peter Collinson. Eastman Colour.)

SAILOR FROM GIBRALTAR, THE (*United Artists*) Ian Bannen ditches Vanessa Redgrave on Italian holiday, to take to the high seas with Jeanne Moreau in search of her long lost love. Weird and very woolly, as though everyone concerned were running a slight temperature. (Director, Tony Richardson.)

*****TAMING OF THE SHREW, THE** (*Columbia*) Much more Zeffirelli than Shakespeare, with the emphasis on colour, clothes, Padua in an apparently permanent state of carnival, and extras mopping and mowing in every corner of the screen. The Burtons acquit themselves tolerably. (Cyril Cusack, Michael Hordern, Michael York. Technicolor, Panavision.)

TO SIR, WITH LOVE (*Columbia*) Priggish saga of a Negro teacher's battle to steer East End pupils through adolescence to maturity. It dips into a wide range of social problems, but prefers thinking schmaltsy to thinking tough. (Sidney Poitier, Christian Roberts, Suzy Kendall; director, James Clavell. Technicolor.)

TRIPLE CROSS (*Warner-Pathé*) Tired variation on the double agent theme, with Christopher Plummer as the thief who buys his freedom from the Germans and his pardon from the British. Based on fact, but glossily concocted and quite lifeless. (Yul Brynner, Romy Schneider, Gert Fröbe, Trevor Howard; director, Terence Young. Technicolor print.)

*****TWO FOR THE ROAD** (*Fox*) Frederic Raphael's pretentious script vies destructively with the gloss of Stanley Donen's direction as Albert Finney and Audrey Hepburn air their marital tensions while driving through France *à la recherche du temps perdu*. (DeLuxe Color, Panavision.) Reviewed.

TWO WEEKS IN SEPTEMBER (*Rank*) Fashion model Brigitte Bardot caught up in a whirlwind affair in London with a dreamy compatriot who whisks her up to the Highlands where killed laird James Robertson Justice lends them his ruined castle for the night. A riot of unconscious comedy. (Laurent Terzieff, Michael Sarne; director, Serge Bourguignon. Eastman Colour, Franscope.)

*****ULYSSES** (*Columbia*) The film itself scarcely justifies all the fuss, but in gallantly tackling the impossible it does strain off some of the Joycean essence, especially towards the end with Barbara Jefford's majestic Molly Bloom making the obscenities sound really musical. (Milo O'Shea, Maurice Rooves; director, Joseph Strick. Panavision.)

*****UP THE DOWN STAIRCASE** (*Warner-Pathé*) Sandy Dennis as novice teacher in tough New York school, pulling through with the aid of Dickens and George Eliot. Nightmarishly funny opening; steadily sympathetic direction by Robert Mulligan. (Patrick Bedford, Eileen Heckart. Technicolor.)

*****WHISPERERS, THE** (*United Artists*) Bryan Forbes' odd, uneasy study in age and loneliness; perceptive when concentrating on the old woman alone with her hallucinations, overwrought when out in the urban jungle. It doesn't work, but Dame Edith is magnificent. (Eric Portman, Gerald Sim, Avis Bunnage.) Reviewed.

*****YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE** (*United Artists*) Assembly-line Bond adventure, so mechanical that the characters are barely human. But there is the usual nice array of dead-pan gadgets and eager girls. (Sean Connery, Tetsuro Tamba, Donald Pleasence; director, Lewis Gilbert. Technicolor, Panavision.)

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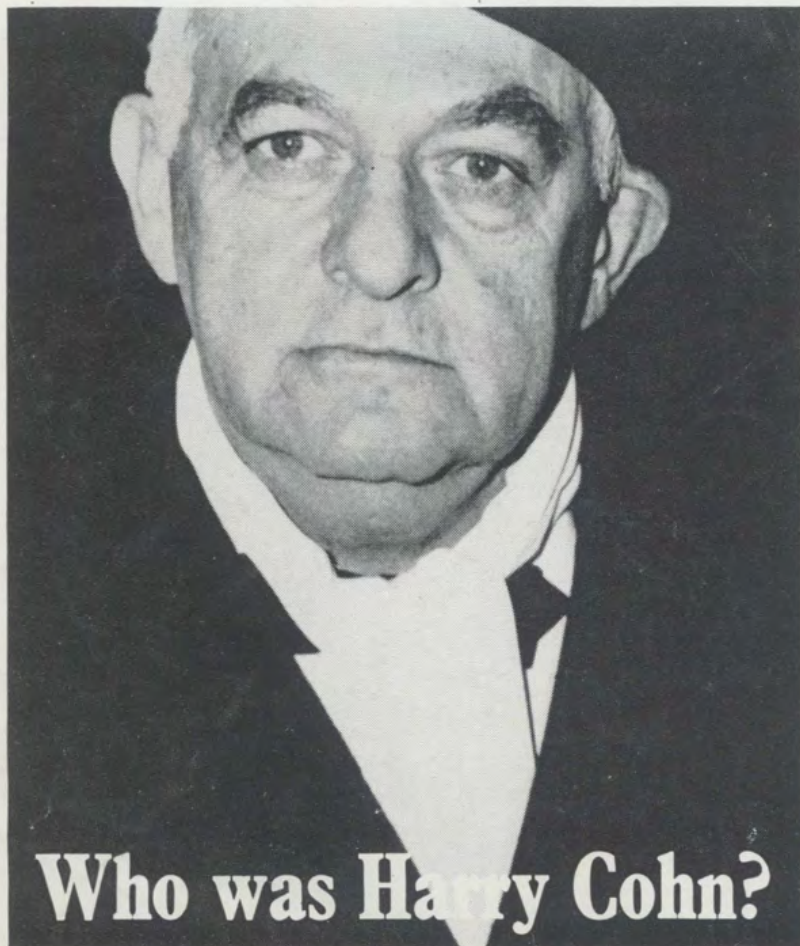
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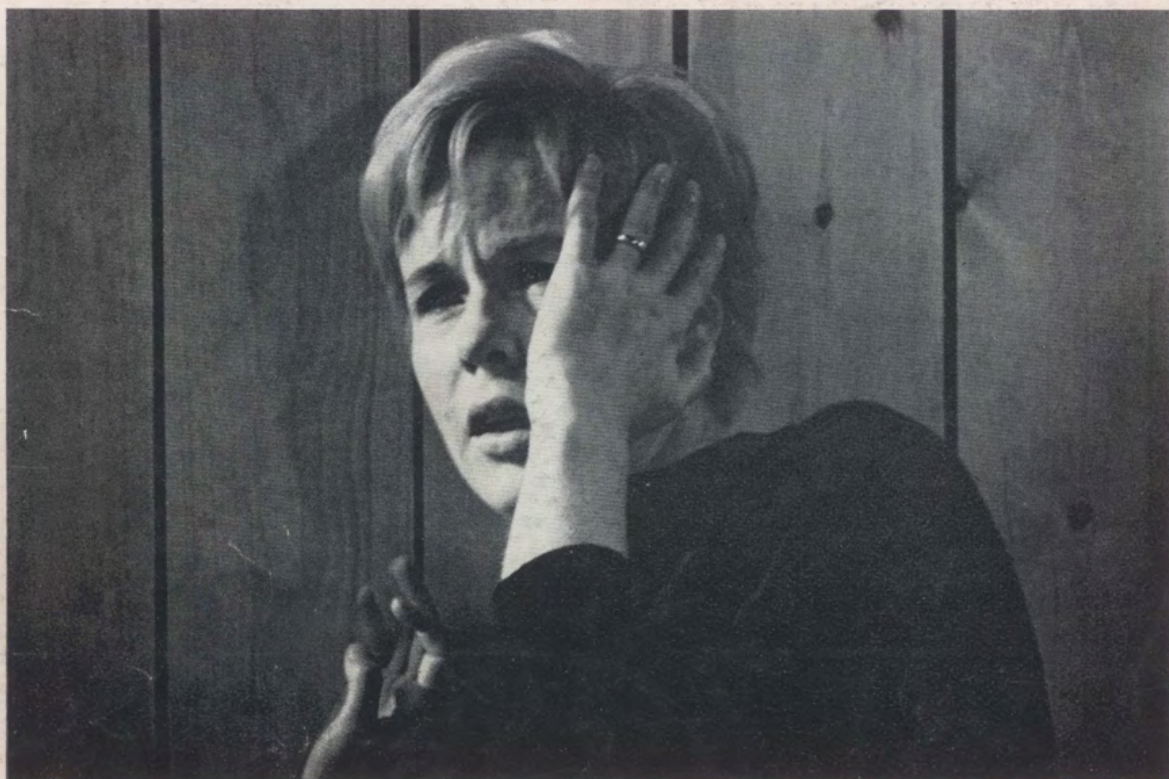


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